

**NATIONAL POLICY-MAKING IN ADULT CONTINUING  
EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES: THE EXPLORATION OF  
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS AND DEMANDS.**  
(A Taiwanese perspective)

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## **Abstract**

This research was designed to explore the factors which influence national adult continuing education (ACE) policy-making and people's demands of national ACE policies in England and Wales. To achieve the purpose, relevant literature was reviewed and empirical data were analysed. Empirical data were collected through two-stage visits, interviews, and a questionnaire survey. People directly or indirectly involved in ACE were sampled as subjects at two stages. In total, there were 158 valid responses including the interviews and questionnaire surveys. The instruments used to collect empirical data were developed by the researcher, linked to the findings of the literature review, visits, and interviews. Methods applied to analyse the collected data included quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The major findings were as follows:

1. Policy-making in the DFE basically had characteristics of a pluralist process.
2. Learner, Economic and Political factors were more influential on the DFE's ACE policy-making.
3. The Learner and Economic factors were the principal influential determinants and they had interactive impacts upon the DFE's ACE policy-making.
4. National ACE policies directly helpful for adult participation in learning were thought important by a comparatively large proportion of the sample.
5. There was a gap between people's demanded ACE policies and the DFE's ACE policies. Comparatively, people's demanded ACE policies were more learner-oriented.
6. Systems theory could provide a systematic and comprehensive analysis exploring influential factors and policy-making in the DFE but was insufficient for discussing the micro process inside.
7. The debate on the ideas of learner-oriented and market-oriented ACE is still ongoing. Even in the recent Green Paper, we can see the coexistence of different policy focuses.

According to the above findings, the researcher made suggestions to the DfEE, professional organisations, and researchers who will study similar topics.

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis involved a long journey for me. It took me from Taiwan to England and lasted over a period of 6 years, from 1992 to 1998. The study of policy-making, especially in a changing world of adult continuing education in England and Wales, is difficult, above all for a foreign student.

On the way I received assistance, support and advice from many people and this acted as a map guiding me to achieve the destination. My supervisor, Professor Andy Green, gave me helpful advice and suggestions. Andy accompanied me from the start to the end. His patience was critical for a foreign student determined to persevere with his studies. Although Dr Gareth Parry joined me on the way, his comments were in time and much appreciated. Professor Ron Barnett was away from me during part of the journey, but his critical and beautiful writing provided a model for me. Professor Geoff Whitty was not my supervisor, but his support was helpful and considerate. I also appreciate Mr Tony Green's assistance in administrative affairs and academic guidance. People who were directly or indirectly involved in this research with the visits, questionnaire surveys, and interviews were clearly crucial. Without them, this research could not have been done. I would like to thank all of them, although most of their names were not known to me.

As a foreign student with the cultural gap to bridge, it was quite challenging for me to conduct research into policy-making. ACE policy-making, in particular, is a thorny topic and it has been changing rapidly in England and Wales. Those factors have resulted in the certain limitations in analysing some relevant issues in their full depth. In relation to this, the questions and comments of my examiners, Professor Peter Jarvis and Dr Paul Armstrong, were extremely helpful in enriching my understanding and I am grateful to them.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>ACACE</b>	Advisory Council for Adult Continuing Education
<b>ACE</b>	Adult Continuing Education
<b>ALBSU</b>	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
<b>DFE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DfEE</b>	Department for Education and Employment
<b>ECA</b>	Educational Centres Association
<b>ERA</b>	Education Reform Act
<b>FEU</b>	Further Education Unit
<b>FEFCs</b>	Further Education Funding Councils
<b>FHEA</b>	Further and Higher Education Act
<b>GNVQs</b>	General National Vocational Qualifications
<b>HEFCs</b>	Higher Education Funding Councils
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Authorities
<b>MSC</b>	Manpower Service Commission
<b>NCVQs</b>	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
<b>NETTs</b>	National Educational and Training Targets
<b>NIACE</b>	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
<b>NVQs</b>	National Vocational Qualifications
<b>PICKUP</b>	Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating Programme
<b>UDACE</b>	Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education

## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adult continuing education (ACE) in England and Wales plays multiple roles. For example, it is an important instrument for the government to improve people's knowledge (Kelly, 1992); for the working class, to satisfy their learning right (Fletcher, 1993; Simon, 1965, 1990); for the employers, to enrich their workforce (Carr-Hill, 1990). ACE has been expected to carry out a diversity of functions. However, compared with school education, ACE is usually marginalised and described as a 'Cinderella' (Evans, 1987; Tuckett, 1993). When ACE in England and Wales has been in change (Arthur, 1992), it is significant and interesting to find out what factors have affected national ACE policy-making at this changing time and people's demands of ACE policy.

This research therefore aimed to study national ACE policy-making in England and Wales. Britain is one of the pioneer countries to have developed ACE. After the long-term development, some changes, for example, in the economic situation, in social mobility, and in the application of information technology, have resulted in shifts in this field. Policy-making is the major activity of administration which leads the operation of administrative departments. It has to be responsive to and responsible for the shifts, particularly at national level. Inquiring into national policy-making, therefore, is a suitable and efficient approach to doing research upon ACE in England and Wales. The researcher mainly employed an empirical method, through exploring the factors affecting national ACE policy-making and people's demands of it to show its current ACE situation and potential future trend.

This chapter consists of five sections to introduce this research:

- 1.1 Research background;
- 1.2 Research purposes;
- 1.3 Definitions of major terms;



## **1.1 Research background**

This section explains the reasons for selecting the topic and shows the motivation of the researcher.

### **ACE has become an important field in educational research and practice.**

Continuing learning throughout life has gradually become a common notion in modern society. The shortage of initial school education partly fosters this development. As Williamson (1991) pointed out, initial school education is an insufficient basis for people's needs. People have to learn new ideas and skills and to adapt to changing conditions at work. School education may have restrictive entry requirements such as admission qualifications so it is unable to be entirely open to everyone. Most people need a more flexible organisation to continue learning when they want to adapt themselves to the changing society. ACE is more flexible than school education in trying to meet the above needs. The year, 1996, was the European Year of Lifelong Learning. How to establish the learning society through teaching and learning for the public has become one of the major educational policies in the European Union countries. The impacts of the information society, of internationalisation and of scientific and technological knowledge have been raised as the three factors of contributing most to change (European Commission, 1996). Developing human potential by investing in education and training is a master key for Europe's future economic and social well-being (Cresson, 1996). Those factors driving the European education policy may cover political, economic, social, educational and individual dimensions.

The openness of ACE not only provides an opportunity for learners but protects people's right to learn. If one likes, one can participate in continuing learning. In this way, one's right to learn is protected. This is what UNESCO declared on 'The Rights to Learn'. According to UNESCO's declaration, the rights to learn include (UNESCO, 1985, pp. 67-68):

- (1) The right to read and write;
- (2) The right to question and analyse;
- (3) The right to imagine and create;
- (4) The right to read one's own world and to write history;

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- (5) The right to have access to educational resources;
- (6) The right to develop individual and collective skills.

The above rights have different levels. The rights to read and write, and to question and analyse are the bases of education. The rights to imagine and create, to read one's own world and to write history, and to develop individual and collective skills are the higher level for personal development and enrichment. The right to have access to educational resources signifies the protection of equal learning opportunity. The idea of the right to learn implies that ACE is the basic right for everyone and if the right can be protected, the aim of establishing a learning society can be achieved. The learning right is one of the five criteria Van der Hendrik (1996) raised for the development of a learning society. It seems that learning is not only individual's right but a social need for development.

Besides the flexibility and protection of the right to learn, other factors are available to explain why ACE has become important in educational research and practice. The research into the participation of adults in continuing education is able to show some reasons for its importance. Houtkoop and Van der Kamp (1992, pp. 537-538) concluded that three recent developments are relevant to participation research:

- (1) Continuing education is being considered as an instrument for raising the economic level of a nation, particularly since the mid-1980s;
- (2) There is a belief that demographic and technological development and their impact on labour markets have made the permanent training and retraining of the labour force essential;
- (3) The tendency at present to consider continuing education as a 'market' governed by relationships between supply and demand.

Houtkoop and Van der Kamp (1992) have pointed out the economic and social factors resulting in the thriving of continuing education. Continuing education has been seen as a 'market' for investment and as an instrument for economic growth. Demographic and technological development, which bring impacts on labour markets, are the results of social change.

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For the purpose of discussion, the researcher listed the following dimensions to explain the reasons possibly facilitating the development of ACE.

### *Individual reasons*

Individual adults are involved in continuing learning for a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. In the inner respect, the proved capacity for learning at an old age is a vital reason. According to traditional Developmental Psychology, the speed of peripheral sensory or motor processes declines with increasing age, and cognitive activities are less used. However, a number of recent studies have indicated that the intelligence is not an obstacle to learning at an old age. As Tuijnman and Van der Kamp discussed, in general, crystallised intelligence, which belongs to trait theories of intelligence, continues to grow slowly throughout adulthood as individuals acquire increased information and develop an understanding of the relation of various facts and constructs (Tuijnman and Van der Kamp, 1992, p. 8). This encouraging argument has stimulated the continuing learning of adults and has pushed public and private providers to invest in this field. It supports that adults' ability in continuing learning would not be negatively influenced by the increasing age. Learning could be a lifelong process and adults could continue learning through their life.

In addition to the advocacy of the right to learn, the increase of life expectancy has created more opportunities for adults. Owing to the development of medical science and living standards, most people in the world have increased their life expectancy. They are able to live longer than before and could have more learning activities. The need for learning for the aged then leads to the growth of a particular style of provision, for example, the generation of 'Universities of the Third Age' in Britain.

In terms of the trend, whether for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, more individual adults have participated in continuing learning. Their purposes may be merely personal eg for self-development and intellectual advancement; or they may be instrumental ie to enrich personal skills and knowledge for competing with others in the labour market. For instance, Beder and Valentine (1987) looked at the reasons for participation in adult basic education. They found

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that there were ten basic motivations for participation among American Iowa adult basic education students: self-improvement, family responsibility, diversion, literacy development, community/church involvement, job advancement, economic need, educational advancement, and the urging of others. These ten basic motivations encompass intrinsic and extrinsic ones. Self-improvement, diversion, and literacy development are intrinsic motivations. Family responsibility, community/church involvement, job advancement, economic need, educational advancement, and the urging of others are extrinsic motivations. They cover multiple dimensions including psychological (self-improvement), educational (literacy development, and educational advancement), social (family responsibility, community/church involvement, and the urging of others), and economic (job advancement, and economic need). The finding shows that adults' participation motivations are diverse.

### *Social reasons*

ACE originally had a function of promoting social equality. It was usually employed to supplement the shortage of school education, especially for the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged, such as people with special needs, those living in deprived areas, and ethnic minorities were more likely to be ignored in the traditional formal school education. With the advocacy of the right to learn, social equality has become a prime factor facilitating the increase of learning opportunity for the disadvantaged. As a result, remedial or compensatory education such as adult basic education has occupied a critical place in this field. To improve the competence in literacy and numeracy for people who failed in or missed out on their initial education in their formative years is the major purpose of adult basic education. It presents a sense of social equality. The establishment of a national institution such as the previous Adult Literacy and Basic Skill Unit (ALBSU) in Britain in 1980 and National Centre on Adult Literacy at University of Pennsylvania in the United States in 1991, shows that adult basic education has been applied to fulfil varied social functions of which social equality may be the fundamental one.

Social change is another reason promoting the growth of ACE. Technological improvement is an indicator of social change. With the development of technology, more modern

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techniques have been created and utilised as teaching methods. For instance, distance learning has been developed via the application of communication technology. Social mobility is another indicator of social change. People have more opportunities to upgrade their occupation and income through continuing learning. Social mobility has been a crucial stimulus for adult learners, for example, the working class. In another aspect, involving themselves in continuing learning has been a popular approach for people to adjust to the fast changing society by enriching updated knowledge.

### *Economic reasons*

As mentioned before, ACE has been seen as an instrument for raising the economic development of a nation, particularly since the mid-1980s. This idea has been supported and enhanced by relevant research. Tuijnman and Van der Kamp (1992, p. 10) summarised that studies in which measures of initial and adult education specified in extended production function have shown that education has a direct effect on productivity. There is also evidence that adult education may have important indirect effects as well, since it influences the efficiency of employing other relevant factors of production such as capital and new technology. In a changing modern society, new technologies are created and applied continuously. In order to increase the productivity, employees need in service professional training to learn how to utilise modern techniques. This is the reason that the focus has been on workplace training. The quality of the workforce directly affects the quality of production. This idea has not only made government's departments and employers stress continuing learning but made employees themselves realise the necessity for it.

The economic function of ACE is usually enhanced by economic demands. As an instrument, ACE has been usually employed to enrich the workforce towards improving the economic regeneration. Rubenson (1992) noted that when many developed societies have faced economic crisis since the Great Depression, the focus has been on education. Education may be one of the solutions to the unemployment problem and it is through education that a country may be able to compete in the world markets in a time of rapid technological restructuring. The focus on educational economic function is mainly

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stimulated by the human capital theory. Presented by Hans Schultze in 1961 in his paper 'Investment in human capital', the human capital theory has become known as the human investment revolution in economic thought. The theory argues that the individual is a sort of resource and he/she is a valuable commodity in which to invest in order to achieve economic goals. As Carnevale (1992) argued, with the idea of human capital theory, economic growth and productivity in developed nations are becoming ever more dependent on their human resources. Educated, healthy, trained, and spirited people are the ultimate source of economic growth. People - not machines - are the source of productivity. Growth in on-the-job know-how, the reallocation of labour, and the increase in the quality of labour through education, training, and health care have consistently associated with more than three quarters of productivity increase since 1929, and for most of growth in national income. Accordingly, learning can be an investment used to add the individual's value, especially through lifelong learning (Commission on Social Justice, 1996). In terms of ACE, both adult basic education and workforce training, which have been the focuses of British provision, actually have functions for promoting human resources and achieving economic goals. With the facilitation of increasing life expectancy and the proof of capacity for lifelong learning, adults, as valuable capital, may gain more investments for economic goals.

### ***Educational reasons***

The modification of traditional idea is a fundamental educational reason assisting the growth of ACE. Education is usually provided as school education or called formal education. After initial education, or say, compulsory education, only a minority who upgrade their education to post compulsory education and higher education enjoy the limited educational resources. The majority who left school after initial education had less opportunity to continue learning. With the development of educational rights and the increase in resources, ACE, which was traditionally served as informal or nonformal education, has obtained resources and a status in the education system. Up to now, formal, informal, and nonformal education have become three parts of the education system though they may have different attention paid to them due to varied situations. ACE has therefore become a subfield of educational services as well as an academic area for research in education.

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According to Jabin, 'education will need to be conducted in much broader array of informal and nonformal as well as formal settings. Education, in other words, will need to be provided in many diverse ways and hence cease to be confined within school walls' (Jabin, 1988, p. 115). ACE provides more opportunities for lifelong learning. School or formal education has not been merely 'within walls' excluding a host of people outside. ACE has altered the outdated concept by getting rid of the wall and involving more people.

### ***Political reasons***

ACE has also been furthered for political reasons. In terms of policy-making, the preceding individual, social, economic, and educational reasons may link to political reasons. When any of the reasons has been included on the government's policy agenda, it becomes quite political. For instance, when the government aims to protect social equality by offering adult basic education, the reason has combined individual, social, and political dimensions. If the government's chief motive is to acquire the public's support to enhance its leadership, the reason is clearly political. When the government increases workforce training to forward the economic regeneration, the reason is economic and political as well. When the government intends to conduct civic education through ACE, say, adult political education, the reason is educational as well as political. Political reasons are usually reflected on the government's motives for policy formulation.

Whatever the reason is, ACE has become an important field in educational research and practice. In brief, for individual reasons, it has been fostered by lifelong learning capacity proved and by increasing life expectancy. For social reasons, it has been facilitated by the idea of social equality and the result of social change. For economic reasons, it has been utilised as an instrument for economic development. For educational reasons, it has occupied a section of the educational system and services. For political reasons, it has appeared on the government's policy agenda for various purposes.

**Policy-making is the central activity of educational administration.**

Administration is a vital part of ACE organisations. In Courtenay's opinion, administrative functions like developing and communicating a mission statement, organising the institution, planning, staffing, budgeting, marketing and evaluating must be in place whether the organisation delivers adult basic education or continuing higher education (Courtenay, 1990). No matter where the ACE policy is formulated and implemented, it is accomplished through a series of administrative behaviours. The crucial role of administration cannot be ignored.

In the process of administration, policy-making is the prime activity. Herbert Simon (1969) said that 'decision-making is the heart of administration'. Briefly, policy-making is the formulation of policy. It conducts the developments and plans of an organisation. Policy-making plays a leading role in an administrative organisation. This is why Clyne stressed that adult education policy-making should be centred on the making of public policies (Clyne, 1993). Studying policy-making is a direct and effective way to realise and to improve ACE. As the UNESCO argued in 1972, lifelong education is the major idea of educational policies. Above all, policy-making conducted in the central government usually scatters a number of impacts throughout the whole country by way of legal and administrative operations. National policy-making in ACE is a significant area for study.

**It is time to examine British ACE in terms of policy-making.**

ACE has a long history in Britain; however, it is usually marginalised. According to Kelly's view, the origin of adult education in Britain can be traced back to the middle ages (Kelly, 1992). But, ACE has frequently been described as the 'poor cousin' of the education system, living on the margins, starved of resources, low in status and far from public priorities. Tuckett (1993, p. 164) indicated that the education of adults has never been given a coherent place in educational planning in Britain. Adult learners have been provided for on the margins of the system. ACE accounts for about 1.1% of the total municipal budgets. As discussed before, in general, ACE has occupied a significant position in the educational provision and research, fostered by individual, social, economic, educational, and political



reasons. In Britain, ACE does have a long history; however, it is still described as a 'Cinderella'. It is interesting to analyse the gap between its long history and its low status.

ACE has become more vocation-oriented and uncertain in Britain. Arthur (1992, p. 368) concluded that 'humanistic adult education beliefs and practices have been marginalised and challenged into accepting instrumental approaches in vocational training, increased certification, assessment and accreditation, into a value-for-money attitude and market-led privatisation of public services as part of an enterprise culture'. There have been factors resulting in the large change, and the Act, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (FHEA), can reflect this change. As Johnston indicated, the development of the National Curriculum and Local Financial Management, the economic reverberations of the poll tax, the increasing 'privatisation' of Further Education and institutional control over adult education as a result of the FHEA, have all served to marginalise the work of adult educators and made people feel increasingly powerless and punch-drunk (Johnston, 1993, p. 147). During this era of change, it is essential to examine the British ACE to explore the influential factors resulting in these shifts.

**British experience in ACE policy-making is sufficient to be referred to by other countries.**

There is an individual reason for the researcher to choose this topic. Since Britain is one of the pioneer countries of developing ACE, its experience is valuable for other countries to refer to when they are planning to develop this field. In the past, ACE was subsumed in social education in the researcher's country, Taiwan, Republic of China. It had no specific status and was marginalised. The situation has gradually changed. Because of the rapid increase of adult's demand for learning and the influence of the world current, the Taiwan's Government invested about US\$1.4 billion for developing ACE in its Six-Year National Development Plan in 1992. ACE in Taiwan did not only acquire abundant resources to grow but upgrade its status, specifically independent from social education. At this moment, British development in ACE policy-making could provide experience for the educational authorities of Taiwan's Government. As a Chinese proverb says, 'If the person you know is

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superior to you, make efforts to learn his/her advantages; if the person you know is inferior to you, do self-examination to avoid his/her disadvantages'. No matter whether the British experience is successful or unsuccessful, it could help the researcher in forming recommendations to Taiwan's Government for improving ACE.

About the study of policy-making, in general, there are two approaches. One is to investigate the informational base upon which policy is constructed. It is what Codd (1988) called 'analysis for policy'. The other is the critical examination of existing policies. It is what Codd (1988) called 'analysis of policy'. This research mainly aimed to explore the informational base upon which policy is constructed, so it is an analysis for policy. According to Codd, analysis for policy can take two different forms (Codd, 1988, p. 235):

- (1) Policy advocacy which has the purpose making specific policy recommendations;
- (2) Information for policy in which the researcher's task is to provide policy-makers with information and data to assist them in the version of formation of actual policies.

The analysis for policy of this research would link the above two forms. It tried to make specific policy recommendations as well as to provide policy-makers with information and data.

In Nordhaug's view, the theoretical framework of adult education integrates different social sciences, mainly sociology and economics (Nordhaug, 1987). The theoretical framework of policy-making has this character as well. Policy-making is a multi-disciplined science. It combines different social sciences to form its own theory. Policy-making even connects the natural science such as information technology to develop so-called 'decision strategy' by computer. Because of the characteristics of theoretical frameworks of ACE and policy-making, the researcher would focus on inspecting the influential factors in different respects, when discussing policy-making of national ACE.

## **1.2 Research purposes**

Providing useful recommendations to practitioners via examining relevant theories and practices in ACE is the basic purpose of the research. Charnley (1984) reviewed research and research documentation in adult education 1974-1984 in Britain (Number of documents=11,899) and then suggested that developmental research is one of the modes which needed more study. In his view, developmental research is in attempt to assist the practitioners to make decisions about goals, priorities, and strategies. This research was developmental research in essence.

Specifically speaking, the purposes of the research were as follows:

### **To explore the factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

Exploring the factors affecting national ACE policy-making in England and Wales is significant. Factors are determinants which could cause positive or negative effects on policy-making. Factors affecting national ACE policy-making may encompass many varied dimensions which policy-makers need to consider broadly when making decisions. This consideration may include many respects such as the needs of society and of adults. It is very helpful for national policy-makers to find out the major influential factors in different dimensions, and then national policy-makers could form policy meeting the real needs accordingly.

### **To inspect the public's demands of national ACE policies**

There are national ACE policies in England and Wales which have been proposed and adopted. A variety of people in the field of ACE may have different perceptions on these national ACE policies. What are the public's demands on national ACE policies? Are they coherent with what have been proposed on the DFE's policy agenda? Their ranking on the proposed policies could reflect a general trend of people's demands on national ACE policies. The expressed demands would be helpful for the DFE to make further ACE policies.

**To compare the influences of factors on national ACE policies**

To find out different factors' influences on national ACE policies would be helpful for policy-makers to manage these factors. Various factors may have different impacts. If it is possible to rank the factors based on their influences, the researcher would be able to point out the difference in importance among various factors. The finding is beneficial for policy-makers to control potential influential resources when making ACE policies. Further, different factors may have different impacts on various patterns of national ACE policies. It is possible to find out the relationship between influential factors and ACE policies.

**To investigate the different opinions on factors among various people**

It is very interesting to understand whether different people involved in ACE have distinct views on factors which have been affecting national ACE policy-making. These people who play different roles in this area may have different experiences and problems. Their views would provide useful information concerning how people perceive influential factors in terms of their gender, age, occupation, and place of residence. These possible differences may reflect diverse concerns and practices. For national policy-makers, this information would be useful for collecting voices in the real world of ACE to develop policy proposals.

**To probe the different demands on national ACE policies among various people**

Various people involved in ACE may have different demands of the central governments' ACE policies. People's expression of their demands on national ACE policies can be further formulated and proposed on the DFE's policy agenda. The ranking on those implemented and proposed ACE policies may also evoke distinct responses from people in the real world. These responses are the feedback to ACE policies and could be applied by the DFE to improve its work in different phases of policy-making. Their responses are also important for national policy-makers to continue or revise their ACE policies. The possible difference between different people may also reveal different demands of various groups. The finding is helpful to show the DFE/DfEE whether people may perceive and demand on national ACE policies differently, in terms of their different demographic variables.

### **1.3 Definitions of major terms**

There were special terms used in this research. Unless they were defined specifically by the researcher, they were used according to accepted usages.

#### **ACE**

There are various terms employed to discuss the education for adults. The general terms are adult education, continuing education, lifelong education, permanent education, recurrent education, further education, community education, and andragogy.

#### ***Adult education***

Adult education is the original term directly created to signify the education for adults. According to Stubblefield and Rachal (1992), in 1814, Thomas Pole, a physician in England, used the phrase for perhaps the first time in English in his book, 'A history of the origin and progress of adult school'. Pole was born in Philadelphia in 1753 but left for England in his early twenties, never to return. The first usage of the term arose from a very specific religiously motivated activity. However, the words 'adult education' are often unstable. Some definitions or usages of 'adult education' are too broad: make education synonymous with all learning. Others are too narrow, identifying it with movements promoting liberal education for social reform (Groombridge, 1983).

UNESCO's definition may be a good example of one of the different usages of adult education. At the UNESCO World Conference in Tokyo in 1972, adult education was defined as (Legge, 1982, p. 4):

A process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular or full time basis, undertake sequential and organised activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes; or for the purpose of identifying or solving personal problems.

The UNESCO's definition of adult education has three marked points:

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(1) The learners of adult education are persons who no longer attend school on a regular or full time basis. It excludes pupils in compulsory education and full-time students in higher education;

(2) The contents of adult education are sequential and organised activities. It excludes casual learning which is unorganised;

(3) The purposes of adult education are to bring about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes; or for the purposes of identifying or solving personal problems. It includes traditionally so-called vocational and nonvocational purposes.

### ***Continuing education***

The term, 'continuing education' reflects most closely the changing nature of adult education (Arthur, 1992, p. 358). According to the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE) set up in 1977, in accordance with the recommendation of the Russell Report, continuing education takes account of 'the developing appreciation of adult education as part of a process which extends from the immediate post-statutory education period through life' (ACACE, 1979).

The definition by ACACE is similar to that of the Open University Committee, which stated that 'continuing education includes learning opportunities which are taken up after full-time compulsory schooling has ceased. They can be full or part-time and will include both vocational and nonvocational study' (Legge, 1982). Accordingly, continuing education means post 16 education and includes adult education that comprises vocational and nonvocational study. In ACACE's opinion, continuing education has the same meaning as permanent education, lifelong education and recurrent education. But, lifelong education and permanent education, and possibly recurrent education clearly include the education of children as well as that of adults (Legge, 1982).

***Lifelong education, Permanent education, and Recurrent education***

Definitions of lifelong education, permanent education, and recurrent education are quite similar. The term, lifelong education, was first used in United States and it was defined as 'formal, nonformal, and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous enhancement of the quality of life, his own and that of his society (Dave, 1976). According to this definition, lifelong education consists of all patterns of learning throughout the life cycle. The definition has been attacked as a fuzzy, shorthand, politically expedient term, offered as a solution to argument of different definitions but it provides a useful stress on the need to consider the unity of education from cradle to grave and on the need to integrate all types of education (Legge, 1982). Accordingly, adult education is a part of lifelong education. Permanent education has the similar meaning as lifelong education. It is from French *education permanente*. The Russell Committee thought that 'permanent' education implied that 'the education system would be re-made to meet people's lifelong but discontinuous needs, which might recur in personal, social, academic, and vocational life (The Russell Report, para.50). Permanent education is aimed at meeting people's diverse needs.

The central meaning of the original recurrent education is rather similar to the notion of lifelong education advanced by UNESCO but still has some differences (Tuijnman, 1991). Houghton and Richardson (1974) argued that the term, 'recurrent education' has been used synonymously or interchangeably with other having similar connotation, such as 'education permanente', 'continuing education', and 'lifelong education'. However, there are some differences between lifelong education and recurrent education. Lifelong education is understood to refer to a set of financial, organisational, administrative, didactic, and legal procedures for the fostering of systematic learning across the life span. Recurrent education is more limited in scope and more utilitarian. In addition, recurrent education is interpreted as being concerned mainly with post-initial education, whereas lifelong education is considered to comprise both basic, higher and adult education (Tuijnman, 1991). Houghton and Richardson (1974) indicated that 'recurrent education stresses human adaptability as an aim and learner-centred as the central idea'. According to the views of Tuijman, Houghton

## ***Chapter 1 Introduction***

and Richardson, the scope of recurrent education is narrower than lifelong education and permanent education. It has its own emphases as well.

### ***Further education***

Further education is a familiar term applied by the government to include adult education as a whole in policy papers and legislation in Britain such as the 1944 Education Act, the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), and the 1992 FHEA. Under this situation, adult education is one part of further education. But, Lowe (1970) pointed out that 'further education is not in popular usage truly comprehensive, for it is usually equated with only the vocational education or training of those who have recently left school'. Arthur (1992) also noted that 'further education is usually seen in the institutional context of further education colleges which deliver general and vocational post-compulsory education aimed at 16-19-year-old'. However, further education colleges have become the adult sectors. 69% of enrollments in further education colleges were adults, compared with 30% of 16-18 age group and 1% of less than 16. No matter what kinds of courses are stressed, because there have been getting more adults studying in further education colleges and 'further education' is often used by the British government, it is usually applied to include adult education.

### ***Community education***

Community education fulfils the education for adults in a unit at local level. Community education carries in its more radical form notions of locality, working class action, and social change. It is used generally in the context of traditional adult education within a particular community (Arthur, 1992). The Scottish Alexander Report (1975) intended to apply 'community education' in a 'wide and comprehensive sense' as a description of 'the wide spectrum of educational opportunities' made available by both statutory and voluntary agencies. The Alexander Report recommended that 'adult education meaning the more academic side..., the more traditional classes and course should be regarded as an aspect of community education, part of community education services which would also embrace the youth and community services'. Obviously, in the Alexander Report, adult education is a part of community education .



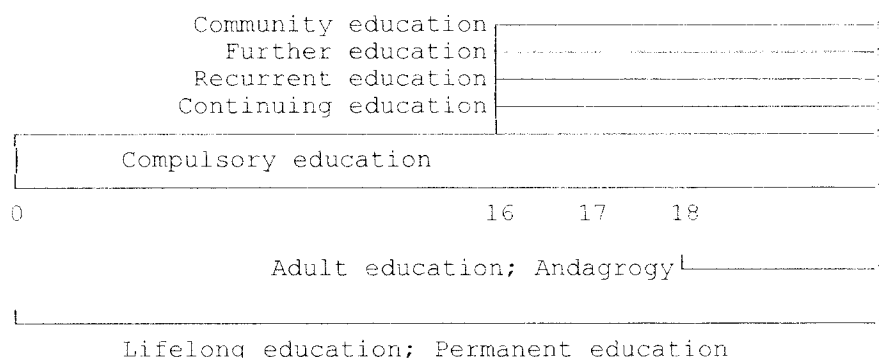
### ***Andragogy***

The term, 'andragogy', was first used in Germany to mean adult education. Alexander Kapp firstly used the term to describe education and learning in the adult age in his study, 'Platons Erziehungslehre' in 1833 (Savi'vi, 1991). 'Andros' means 'man' and 'andragogy' signifies 'leading adults to learn'. The term is relative to 'pedagogy', which stands for 'leading children to learn'. Many countries in Europe do not use 'adult education' but prefer 'social pedagogy' such as Netherlands and Belgium. Some Asian countries employ 'social education' to include adult education, for example, Japan, and India. In Taiwan, adult education was also submerged in social education before. Andragogy in most European countries is regarded as one of the disciplines of pedagogy, whereas pedagogy is considered as an integrating science of education (Savi'vi, 1991). However, andragogy has not been widely used outside its academic context. One of the reasons is that since its original meaning of 'man', it may result in the worry of gender discrimination.

The differences and similarities among these terms above about the education of adults could be made clear by comparison. It is possible to compare these terms by examining learners and contents.

#### ***(1) Learners***

In terms of learners, there are some differences and similarities among these terms above. The learners of the education for adults are adults. Though there are arguments on the age of 18 or 20, 18 has been widely accepted to as the beginning age of adult education. For those terms, adult education, and andragogy, the learners are adults over 18; but for continuing education, recurrent education, further education, and community education, the learners may be post 16, say, including young people from 16 to 17. As to lifelong education and permanent education, the learners may be all the people from cradle to grave. Figure 1 shows the differences and similarities of these terms based on the scope of possible learners.



**Figure 1.1.** The scope of learners possibly included by the terms about ACE.

## (2) Contents

The learning contents for adults included by these distinct terms respond to diverse individual and social needs. Traditional binary division of vocational and nonvocational education is not common here. Although continuing education and further education are described as more concerned with vocational education and traditional adult education is seen as liberal education, this kind of simplistic classification has become less important. It is meaningless to distinguish the terms by vocational or nonvocational courses. In the terms of contents, there is no obvious difference among these terms.

There are different ways to define the education for adults. Spaulding and Groombridge divided education into formal, nonformal and informal education to describe the education for adults. Spaulding (1974, p. 103) listed six types of ranges of lifelong educational services and activities. Each form of education has two types:

### (1) Formal education

Type 1: Highly structured and rigid educational institutions and programmes with a highly prescriptive content;

Type 2: Highly structured and prescriptive educational activities with long-term goals, but involving a degree of flexibility in organisation and programmes;

### (2) Nonformal education

Type 3: Moderately structured educational activities and institutions usually consisting of formal courses and seminars directed toward prescriptive learning goals;

## ***Chapter 1 Introduction***

Type 4: Loosely structured educational services which seek to find and influence people with a fairly prescriptive message and content;

### **(3) Informal education**

Type 5: Participant-governed groups in which people elect to join in activities with others of similar interests;

Type 6: Services which provide a broad range of informational and educational media from which people select according to their interests.

The six types of lifelong educational services and activities comprise all kinds of learning designed by voluntary and statutory institutions or undesigned from different resources. Groombridge (1983, pp. 12-16) also from formal, nonformal and informal education suggested three modes of adult education:

### **(1) Mode 1: school education**

In mode one, experts with authority decide what is to be learned and whether it has been learned satisfactorily.

### **(2) Mode 2: popular(group) or personal(individual)**

In mode 2, the individual or group decide what they need, what is good for them and whether they have learned it to their satisfaction.

### **(3) Mode 3: partnership**

In mode 3, what is to be learned is decided by negotiation between those who wish to learn and those responsible for teaching.

There are similarities between Spaulding's six types and Groombridge's three modes. Groombridge's first mode is similar to Spaulding's types 1 and 2; second mode is similar to types 3 and 4. The scope of Groombridge's third mode is narrower than that of Spaulding's types 5 and 6. Spaulding's and Groombridge's typologies of the education for adults provide a clear scope of adult education and may avoid the arguments of different terms.

The usage of terms to discuss the education for adults has some shifts in Britain. The term, adult education, is firstly used in Britain and most important Reports such as the 1919 Report, the Ashby Report and the Russell Report all directly applied this term. Up to now, although adult education is still a common term to mean education for adults, some modified terms have appeared. Rivera (1987) argued that 'adult education' connoted the educational

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system and formal education. Rivera suggested that 'adult learning' overrode the limitations that might be inferred from the term 'adult education' since education suggested both a specific sector of society and the education system (Rivera, 1987, p. 1). In Rivera's opinion, 'adult education' is easily misunderstood that it means the formal education such as child education or youth education restricted in the specific sectors. The term, 'adult education' narrows the scope of the education for adults. There are examples of the change in terminology from 'adult education' to 'adult learning'. One of the journals published by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 'Adult Education' has changed its name to 'Adults Learning' since September 1989. The Executive Committee of the NIACE has recommended that whilst retaining the organisation's formal name as 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales)', it would adopt the working title, 'The National Organisation for Adult Learning' as the banner on all published materials from 1st September 1993.

'Education of adults' has been used to substitute the term, 'adult education' sometimes. Legge (1982) and Groombridge (1983) recommended that 'education of adults' is more open-minded than 'adult education'. 'Education of adults' comprises education for adults in a broad aspect and avoids the specific but narrow definition of 'adult education'. An example of the shift is that the other journal published by the NIACE, 'Studies in Adult Education' has changed its name to 'Studies in the Education of Adults' from October 1984.

NIACE is the major and important organisation about the education of adults in Britain. Any of its policy changes may reflect something meaningful in this field. It shifted its name from 'National Institute of Adult Education' to 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' in 1983, adding the word, 'Continuing' to enlarge the scope of education for adults.

As Lawan (1985) stressed, 'within British culture, the concept (and the related practice) of adult education is not unitary and any attempt to provide overall definitions does a gross injustice to the field'. Maybe broader terms like 'education of adults' or 'adult learning' could avoid the 'gross injustice'.

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In this research, the researcher employed the term, 'ACE' to mean continuing learning activities for adults achieving different targets. 'ACE' could not only bypass the drawback of 'adult education' supposed as formal education but also adds 'continuing education' to emphasise the idea of lifelong learning. Briefly, 'ACE' in this research was defined as the education for adults over 18 and its contents include vocational and nonvocational courses.

### **Policy-making**

In this research, policy-making meant the formation of policy in ACE, focusing on the national level. The policy might include proposals about courses, subjects, curriculum, structures, budgets, funding, accreditation and other respects of administration in ACE.

### **Factor**

In this research, factors meant the important determinants affecting national ACE policy-making. Factors were developed from the literature review and empirical data, and would be further confirmed.

### **Demand**

In this research, demands meant the needs, requirements or expectation on ACE. They would be shown through different opinions expressed by various people involved in the field of ACE.

## **1.4 Research scopes**

Research scopes are the ranges which this research would cover or focus on. Two scopes are emphasised below:

### **The scope of policy-making**

In terms of policy-making in ACE, it can happen at least at three levels in England and Wales: the central government, the local government, and institutions. Policy-making in this research would focus on the level of the central government for the following reasons:

***The consideration of research purposes***

The original research purpose was to acquire an understanding of British ACE from the past onwards to the possible future. It is suitable to concentrate on national policy-making to obtain a whole and comprehensive picture. This focus also could easily help the researcher to make recommendations to his Government.

***The consideration of the diversity at local government and institutions levels***

The provision of ACE at local and institutions level may be too diverse to present a general picture. ACE at local level is served to try to meet the local needs. Owing to the diversity of the local community, provision of ACE seems to be varied. In this situation, it is difficult to achieve a complete description to form a national picture. Provision at institutions level also have this characteristic. National policy-making could avoid this shortage of generalisation. If the researcher intended to have a deep analysis on specific topics by case studies, focusing on the local government or institutions would be more suitable.

***The scope of sampling***

Subjects selected in this research were sampled among different institutions regard to ACE. Five kinds of main subsamples for the postal questionnaire survey were chosen: ACE administrators in LEAs, lecturers in higher education institutions providing relevant courses of ACE, leaders of professional organisations, and adult educators. Adult educators were from a variety of colleges including further education colleges, long-term and short-term residential colleges, and colleges of Educational Centres Association (ECA). Other subsamples would contain officials in the DFE; senior administrators in the Further Education Funding Councils (FEFCs), Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs), previous Further Education Unit (FEU), Directors of NIACE, ALBSU and institutions providing ACE. The scope of sampling comprised central and local government's departments (the previous DFE and LEAs), professional organisations (NIACE and ALBSU), semi-government's organisations (FEU, FEFCs, and HEFCs), statutory institutions (further education college), and voluntary institutions (higher education institutions, residential colleges, and colleges of ECA).

## **1.5 An overview of this research**

This research contained three parts and nine chapters. As Figure 6.1 showed, this research was conducted through three stages: developing, implementing, and concluding. The researcher employed different approaches to carrying out these three stages. At the developing stage, the literature review, visits, interviews, and a questionnaire survey in person were used. At implementing stage, a questionnaire survey by post, data analysis, and interviews were utilised. Discussion and suggestions were finished at concluding stage. These three parts and nine chapters illustrated and connected the three stages and different approaches in detail. Part 1 was 'constructing: the base of research'. It included chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. As a whole, chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 were the literature review. Part 2 was 'conducting: into the real world'. It comprised chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 was the methodology. Chapter 7 was the empirical data analysis of postal questionnaire survey and of interviews at stage 2. Part 3 was 'concluding: the way to go'. It contained chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 was the discussion of findings. Chapter 10 was the conclusion. A brief review of each chapter is as follows.

Chapters 2 and 3 were historical reviews of the government's documents and legislation relating to ACE and policy implications. The main purpose of these two chapters was to scan the ACE policy changes in England and Wales via a historical perspective linking documents and practices. Chapter 2 covered the time from 1900 to 1993. It reviewed the 1919 Report, the 1944 Education Act, the Ashby Report, and the Russell Report, the 1988 ERA and the 1992 FHEA. In addition to these major Reports and legislation, chapter 2 looked back to the history and discussed the evolution of major ACE sectors. It mentioned their origination, development, and their relationship. In chapter 3, the researcher explored the policy implications of these changes of ACE via the previous historical review. When illustrating the reasons of changes, the researcher drew attention to five groups of factors, combining the historical reviews, the ACE practices, and the relevant literature review. These five groups of factors were political, economic, social, educational, and learners' factors. They were proposed factors affecting the changes of ACE policy-making and to be further confirmed.

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Chapter 4 presented the theoretical framework of this research and this framework was applied to discuss policy-making of the previous DFE in chapter 5. Chapter 4 first introduced the concept of policy and policy analysis. Then it reviewed different approaches to studying policy analysis. Since the context of this research was in England and Wales, chapter 4 particularly focused on British research upon policy analysis. It listed four main approaches: the political model, the state model, the pressure group model, and the system model. The strengths and limitations of these approaches were discussed and compared. After the comparison of these approaches and referring to the research purposes, the researcher found that the systems model would be a comparatively suitable approach for this research. Systems theory and its relevant concepts therefore were illustrated. The researcher also evaluated systems theory in chapter 4. Systems theory was utilised to develop the theoretical framework of this research. It was also employed to examine the DFE's policy-making in chapter 5. Chapter 5 showed varied organisations associated with national ACE policy-making. It pointed out that the DFE has become a major policy-maker of national ACE policy. The process of policy-making in the DFE was analysed and evaluated in a sequential and rational way. This view provided a clear structure for discussing the complex process of policy-making. Policy-making in the DFE then was further analysed through systems theory. Seven phases of the DFE's policy-making could be included in three stages of systems theory: input, throughput, and output. The researcher indicated the importance of a pluralist process in the DFE's policy-making according to the systems analysis.

Chapter 6 was the methodology of this research. It first illustrated the conducting process and analysing framework of this research. Then it explained how this research had been carried out in detail. Chapter 6 covered the analytical framework, research questions and hypotheses, methods for data collection, sampling and the sample, instruments for data collection, implementing procedure, and data analyses.

Chapter 7 was the analysis of empirical data collected from the postal questionnaire survey and from interviews at stage 2. The approaches used in chapter 7 were mainly statistical methods and discussion. The analyses of postal questionnaire data comprised the



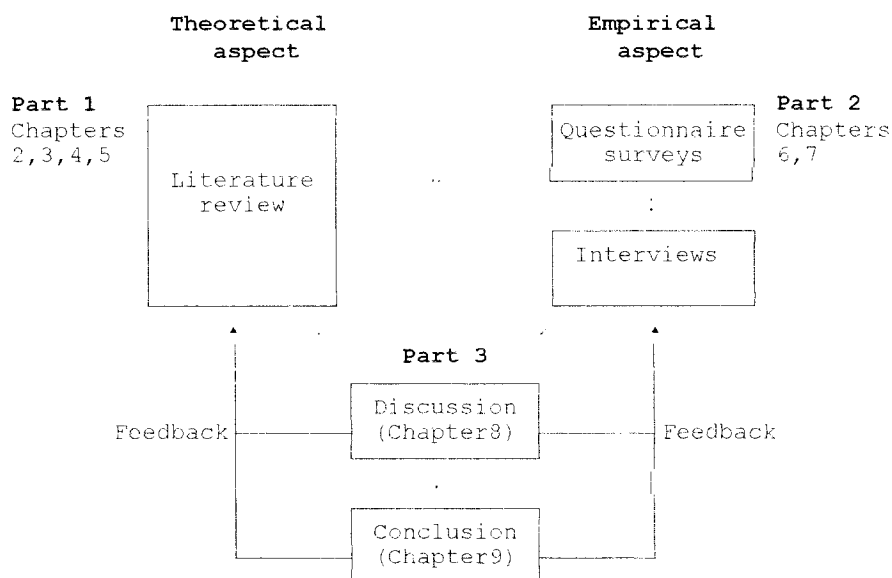
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confirmation of influential factors, the relationship between factors and national ACE policies, the comparison of different people on the ranking on factors and policies, and the comparison of the influences of factors on national ACE policies. Most of the results and findings were presented by statistics, tables, and diagrams. Data collected from interviews at stage 2 were also analysed according to different questions. These questions were partly used to examine the findings of postal questionnaire survey and partly applied as another resource of empirical data. Data collected from the postal questionnaire survey and interviews were analysed together to get qualitative and quantitative findings. The findings then were discussed in chapter 8.

Chapter 8 aimed to explore the meanings behind the findings. In chapter 8, the researcher raised possible reasons for interpreting these findings of the previous chapter 7. These reasons were sought out via the comparison between the literature review and empirical data. Discussion was mainly based on the raised hypotheses. Each hypothesis was tested and discussed according to the related findings and reasons.

Chapter 9 was the conclusion. It concluded the whole research via tracing back to the starting point and looking at forward trend. It reviewed this research from the exploration of the changes of British ACE, the application of systems theory, the analysis of policy-making in the DFE, and the findings. After having finished this research, the researcher drew up suggestions to policy-makers in the DFE and professional organisations in a practical view, and to researchers who may study similar topics in a view of research.

Accordingly, the structure of this thesis can be shown as Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2** The structure of this thesis.

As Figure 1.2 lists, this thesis was organised in three parts and nine chapters. It combined theoretical and empirical aspects together. Theoretical aspect was developed from the literature review in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Empirical aspect was developed from two-stage questionnaire surveys and interviews. The researcher also conducted visits into adult education institutions for an empirical understanding. Those empirical data were described and analysed in chapters 6 and 7 in part 2. Part 3, which included chapters 8 and 9, was developed from discussion to conclusion.

## **Summary**

The chapter has presented an introduction of this research. In this research, 'ACE' was used to mean proposed continuing learning activities for adults for different targets. The chief purposes of this research were to find out factors affecting national ACE policy-making, different people's viewpoints on influential factors, the relationship between factors and different national ACE policies and people's demands of ACE policy. Policy-making was focused on the national level for the reason of getting a complete and comprehensive picture. The selected sample comprised different relevant people in governmental departments and

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institutions to reflect the diversity of ACE and to enhance the generalisability of findings.

## **Part 1**

### **CONSTRUCTING: THE BASE OF RESEARCH**

Part 1 lays the foundation of this research via a review of relevant literature to develop a theoretical framework. It tries to construct the base of this research. In part 1, a variety of literature will be reviewed. The literature review covers a historical review of legislation and Reports regarding ACE, approaches to studying policy-making and policy-making in the DFE.

Part 1 comprises four chapters:

Chapter 2 A legislative review of ACE;

Chapter 3 The changing face of ACE;

Chapter 4 Systems analysis of policy-making;

Chapter 5 Formulation of national ACE policy.

## **Chapter 2**

# **A Legislative Review of ACE**

Relevant legislation associated with ACE could have a significant influence on national ACE policy-making. It could show the legislative insights and the guidelines of ACE, and hence impact national ACE policy-makers. To find out which factors affect national ACE policy-making and get a picture of ACE in England and Wales, it is helpful to trace its relevant legislation through a historical review. Accordingly, this chapter is a historical review of Acts and Reports associated with ACE in England and Wales from 1900 to 1998. Although Reports are not legislation and have no legal efficacy, they are official documents and may also have some influence. The focuses of this chapter include a brief discussion of institutions, Acts, and Reports and their implications and influence on the practice of national ACE policy-making.

The chapter comprises the following three sections:

- 2.1 Legislation as the basis of national ACE policy-making;
- 2.2 A brief review of the main ACE institutions;
- 2.3 Major Acts and Reports from 1900 to 1998.

### **2.1 Legislation as the basis of national ACE policy-making**

In a modern and democratic country, legislation is made to serve as the legal regulations and official guidelines of government policy-making. The contents of this legislation may stem from the current and future needs of different clients such as the public, professional groups and state. Those needs are gathered and reflected in the legislative institutions usually organised by people's representatives. Those representatives are empowered and expected to protect and achieve the greatest rights and benefits for their people. Thus the public's needs can be met via their representatives as well as by themselves. Especially important, legislation related to public policy which is closely concerned with public welfare is demanded to reflect the public's needs as sufficiently as possible. After the legislation goes

through the necessary procedures from the draft bill to the formal act, it becomes empowered and imposes legal regulations to be carried out by government administration. The government then develops goals from the legislation for its policy-making and uses the legislation to form criteria for assessment. Those goals and criteria then become the guidelines of the government's policy-making. The government is therefore able to conduct its policy-making according to proper legislation to meet the needs of the public, professional groups, and state which is one of the government's responsibilities. Moreover, the public's representatives asks the government to do as much for their supporters. So, an analysis of legislation will be helpful for researchers who wish to understand government policy-making.

ACE policy is public policy and thus has a close relationship with the public. Legislation regarding ACE will be formulated to reflect the needs of the public, professional groups and state and becomes the guidelines of the government policy-making. Specifically, national ACE policy-making that is conducted under the leadership of the central government is sensitive to legislation because policy implementation covers the whole country and may directly impact the relevant people, eg adults. Accordingly, the government's national ACE policy-making should maintain a close relationship with the relevant legislation and what follows. For researchers who wish to study national ACE policy-making, a review of the relevant legislation is necessary and important to explore its changes, demands, and other influential factors.

Legislation has a significant status in Britain, the mother country of democracy. Legislation is enacted via the House of Commons and the House of Lords to reflect the needs of the public, professional groups and state and to guide the government's administration. In terms of national ACE policy-making, legislation such as Acts and the government's official Reports related to ACE can be influential in Britain. The recommendations of Reports and the regulations of Acts concerning ACE are usually referred to and cited by the policy-makers led by the DFE and become significant guidelines for national ACE policy-making. As Jennings comments, a favourite British method of policy formulation is the appointment

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of a committee to investigate a particular area or problem and make recommendations (Jennings, 1985). In terms of ACE, the 1919 Report, the Ashby Report, the Russell Report, the 1944 Education Act, the 1988 ERA and the 1992 FHEA are all noted examples. The regulations of Acts are the criteria employed by the DFE or Her Majesty's Inspectors to guide the administration and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of LEAs or other statutory sectors. Comparatively speaking, although the Reports have no legal regulations, their recommendations may be included in national ACE policy-making. Additionally, there may be a gap between policy recommendations and policy formulations, but relevant Acts and Reports can exercise influence on the DFE's ACE policy-making through different ways and in different degrees.

For the reasons above, the researcher will undertake a historical review of the ACE policy changes in England and Wales, as seen in major relevant Acts and Reports from 1900 to 1998. Of these years, the researcher will review the following important Reports and Acts relating to ACE: the 1919 Report, the 1944 Act, the Ashby Report, the 1973 Russell Report, the 1988 ERA and the 1992 FHEA.

Before the analysis of the above Reports and Acts, it will be helpful to present a brief historical review of the main ACE institutions. This review will provide a background of how ACE institutions function in the real world.

### **2.2 A brief historical review of main ACE institutions**

ACE activities have been carried out for a long time in Britain. Kelly indicated that the earliest motive for adult education was religious and the earliest example, in the 16th century, was that of Puritan ministers who undertook the instruction of adults in their spare time, one minister being said to have taught forty people over forty years of age to read (Kelly, 1992). Among the churches that offered adult education at the beginning of the 19th century, the Methodists made the most distinctive contributions. Both Puritans and Methodists offered adult education for religion such as through the training of lay preachers and members on weekday evenings as well as chapel service on Sunday (Jennings, 1985).

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Rowntree and Binns (1985) pointed out that in 1789, an Adult Sunday School for Bible reading and instruction in the secular arts of writing and arithmetic was opened in Nottingham.

In addition to the preachers and members of religious groups, the working-class involvement in adult education has a history as long as that of the working-class itself (Simon, 1990, p. 9). Simon said from the late eighteenth century, workers sought to understand the reasons for their consequent suffering (Simon, 1990). According to Simon (1969), the self-education of the workers 1790-1820 included: the Corresponding Societies, individual study, Hampden clubs and secular Sunday schools, and political activities. Hampden clubs were formed due to the agitation for Parliamentary reform in 1816-17. They were inspired directly by Major Cartwright, and like the Corresponding Societies, promoted discussion in organised classes side by side with political activities. The working class, involved in the above Societies, clubs, and activities, soon realised the necessity of extending social and political knowledge among the people. Up to the first half of the 19th century, the Mechanics' Institutes (MIs) stood out as the typical form of working class adult education. As Kelly (1992) emphasised, the MIs were by no means the only form of working class adult education. As in the later 18th century, the various working class's radical movements also gave rise to educational activities, which developed almost independently of the MIs, if not in actual opposition to them. For instance, the Working Men's College in the 19th century played a significant part. Kelly (1992, p. 188) indicated that the Working Men's College movement was of fundamental importance in the history of adult education because for the first time it drew attention to the distinction between technical education and liberal studies. Hitherto adult education, whether elementary, as in the adult schools, or more advanced as in the MIs, had been quite generalised in character. Any form of adult education was conceived to be good; any form of adult education would help people to live fuller lives, would make them better workers and better citizens.

The main institutions of ACE in England and Wales are so diverse that ACE is described as a jumble, or at least a mosaic, impossible to reduce to order and neatness (Harrison, 1961,



p. 313). To sum up, the providers of ACE cover LEAs, which had been the major statutory provider via different sectors, universities, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), industry and trade unions, voluntary organisations, commercial agencies, mass media, libraries, museums and so on (Legge, 1981). Followings are the chief ACE providers, which, together, provide a historical picture of ACE in England and Wales.

### **Mechanics' Institute**

The MIs initially offered adult education for the working class. According to Jennings, experiments in teaching scientific knowledge to skilled workers in Glasgow led to the creation of MIs, which spread rapidly from Scotland to England. The institutes were established in the main industrial towns in the 1820s, with the aim of educating skilled workers in the scientific principles underlying their craft (Jennings, 1985). The MIs flourished from 1815 to 1856, particularly from 1823 onwards when the London MI was founded under the presidency of Dr George Birkbeck (Edwards, 1961).

It is easy to understand that the MIs mainly aimed at teaching skilled workers but at the same time the middle class also could learn about scientific and technical achievement through these institutes. Although the institutes proved more attractive to men in white collar and commercial occupations, they provided an opportunity for large numbers of working people to encounter systematic courses of learning (Lawson and Silver, 1973, p. 261).

The MIs movement spread from the cities first into the smaller towns and then, by the 1840s, into the villages. In 1851, there were nearly 700 MIs in Britain (Jennings, 1985). During this period, both the MIs and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which was set up under similar auspices in 1827, had made many contributions to teaching artisans scientific principles. Gradually, the MIs had become an established part of national life and the origin of further education college.

### **Evening schools and evening institutes**

Adult evening schools must be assigned a most important role in the history of early nineteenth-century adult education (Kelly, 1992). It was in these schools, perhaps more than anywhere else, that illiterate and semi-literate adults acquired the elements of education (Kelly, 1992). Kelly has shown the significant role of the evening schools in ACE. The earliest evening school in Britain originated with the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge founded in 1698 to 'combat the barbarous ignorance of the poor' (Edwards, 1961, p. 14). The facts reveal that evening schools had a long history and that their primary role was the local education of the lower class. In practice, the schools served two purposes (Edwards, 1961, p. 18):

- (1) The elementary education of youths and adults who had never been to day schools;
- (2) The continuing education of those who had attended day school and who acquired their knowledge to be 'fixed and perfected'.

Evening institutes developed from evening schools and their character in most of England and Wales, underwent a gradual change in the two decades after the First World War. Edwards (1961) concluded that at this time, evening institutes were of two types:

- (1) Junior evening institutes: Students under the age of 18 accounted for one-third of all the enrolments and a great many of these students were attending vocational classes;
- (2) Adult evening institutes: Almost all the vocational students had been transferred to the technical colleges and their place had been filled more by students in leisure time classes.

In Edwards's view, the courses in evening institutes were leisure-time and vocational classes. But, Jennings (1985) indicated that the evening institutes had become almost exclusively concerned with the 'non-vocational' field, especially domestic arts, creative arts, physical education, and languages. Although there were some changes in the emphasis on types of courses, evening institutes became the basis of the late institutions of ACE.

### **Centres for adult education and residential colleges**

Centres for adult education, residential and non-residential colleges have an important status in ACE. Kelly (1992) argued that one of the most encouraging and interesting features of the post-war period was the increasing provision of special centres for adult education. The tradition of the non-residential centre can be traced back to the Mechanics' Institutes and working men's colleges of the nineteenth century, but few of these survived as educational institutions into the twentieth century (Kelly, 1992, p. 383). Both Kelly (1992) and Jepson (1959) stressed that one of the outstanding features of the post-war development of residential colleges, particularly the short-term ones, was to contribute to the liberal and humanistic education of technicians and industrialists.

There were two kinds of residential colleges: long-term and short-term. The long-term residential colleges were independent and well-established. The main purpose of the long-term residential colleges was the provision of full-time courses in the liberal or social sciences, lasting for one or two years, for adults with serious academic interests who sought the benefit of residential study (Jennings, 1981, p. 112). Lowe (1970, p. 79) also noted that 'the long-term residential colleges were expected to offer "facilities designed for the liberal education of persons of at least 18 years of age and suitable to be accepted as part of the public provision for further education". As to the short-term residential colleges, their emergence was a remarkable feature of the post-war developments in England and Wales. The short-term residential colleges were mostly controlled by LEAs or run jointly by LEAs and bodies such as the universities or trusts. The basic function of a short-term residential college was to provide study courses that varied in length from one day up to three or even five weeks. These courses were concerned with liberal studies and usually had no vocational purpose. Clearly, both long-term and short-term residential colleges basically aimed to offer nonvocational courses for adults.

The origin of residential colleges had a close relationship with education for the working class. The first long-term residential college was Ruskin College established for working class students in Oxford in 1899 with aims rather similar to those of the WEA. In Jennings's

opinion, the appearance of Ruskin College was the result of the ideological struggle of the WEA to search for a working-class education free of capitalist influence (Jennings, 1985). This view also reveals the significant role of the WEA in ACE.

### **University Extension**

The most distinctive feature of adult education in Britain in modern times has been the contribution of the universities. The term 'University Extension', when it first came into use in the 1840s, meant primarily the extension of facilities for full-time university education. A start had already been made by the Foundation of the University of London in 1826 and the University of Durham in 1832 (Kelly, 1992). The formal work of the University Extension, in its modern sense, began under the auspices of the University of Cambridge in 1873, and arose out of two specific demands: (1) university education for working men; (2) reform of English secondary education. The first demand was significant enough to be mentioned. It was the reason why later the WEA put much emphasis on the University Extension.

The task of organising on a national scale the working class demanding for adult education was taken over from 1903 onwards by the WEA, which used the medium of evening classes and attached itself firmly to the existing tradition of the University Extension. Throughout the first decade of the new century, the University Extension continued to flourish, with about 50,000 students on average attendance. Most of them were in courses arranged by Oxford, Cambridge, and London, but the newer universities also made some contributions, especially in the earlier years of the century (Kelly, 1992).

The University Extension movement was another movement concerned primarily with the education of the working class. Simon (1965) showed that the University Extension movement, first taking organised form in 1873, reached its climax in the late 1880s and early 1890s when up to 60,000 students were attending lectures and classes. The University Extension movement provided the working class with higher education opportunities.

While the opportunity to study in higher education institutions was still limited, the University Extension provided a path toward carrying out the dream of higher education and thus could help in the upgrading of social status. For the disadvantaged groups, the University Extension could provide a compensatory function for higher education. For example, today, the University Extension is meant not only provide more higher education opportunities for more working class people, but to increase their incomes and influence. The responsible body is called the 'Extra-mural department'. It plays a major role in universities for extension education. The movement currently taking place in many British universities to expand their access to mature students through part-time degrees and modularised courses is welcome, if belated, and progress should be encouraged.

## **WEA**

The WEA is a significant provider of ACE. It organises a wide variety of courses for adults, in particular low-paid workers and other disadvantaged groups, on academic, recreational, and vocational subjects. The WEA classes have proved a popular way of providing education, of a high standard and in the liberal tradition, for the working class, even if they do not involve any transformation of the ancient universities themselves (Simon, 1965, p. 311). As mentioned before, education for the working-class played a salient part in ACE in Britain. Fletcher (1993, p. 149) said, 'English adult education has its origins in workers' struggle, in their determination to learn to read and write which paralleled their struggle for the existence and rights of trade unions'. The WEA's chief objective is to protect the education rights of the working class and other disadvantaged groups.

The WEA was founded in 1903 by Albert Mansbridge. According to Simon's classification, the aims of the WEA were to assist the working class to gain access to knowledge, to develop their capacity for thought and study, and to help them apply their knowledge, if they wished, to the resolution of social, economic and political problems. The WEA saw its role initially as one of making up for the defects of state education, of providing educational opportunities (Simon, 1990). Kelly (1992) also emphasised that one of the most striking

features of adult education in the fifties and sixties was the development of the WEA. Even now, the WEA still plays a vital role in ACE.

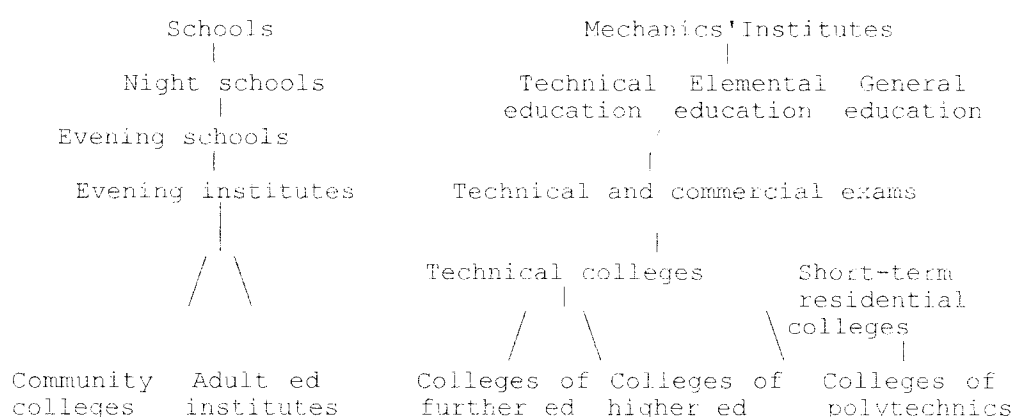
The statistics of the NIACE (1998) show that the WEA is the largest voluntary adult education organisation in the United Kingdom and has 15 WEA districts, about 650 local branches and about 150,000 students enrolled in courses each year. The WEA is an institution designated to receive funding from the FEFCs in England and Wales.

ACE offered by the above providers has been developed in England and Wales along different trends. As Gordon, Aldrich, and Dean (1991) put it, at the start of the twentieth century that tradition was based upon a variety of nineteenth-century foundations. By the start of the twentieth century the concept of adult education in England had been fashioned largely by a series of unrelated initiatives and events. It was essentially part-time. It was not the result of direct legislative intervention for the most part. Nevertheless the provision for compulsory schooling from 1880 had meant that elementary instruction for adults would increasingly be regarded as a remedial activity. The presentation of the 1919 Report was the first action by which the central government intended to directly intervene in this field. There were some indications at the turn of the century of a new, even passionate, interest in adult education. One of the most striking features was the sudden revival and spread of the Adult School Movement, which took even those engaged in it by surprise. Here the mainland, and especially Leicestershire, was the spearhead (Simon, 1965, p. 303). The establishment of a national organisation, The National Council of Adult School Associations, in 1899 was described as the breakthrough that released the flood-tide of extensions in the county. At least the fifteen years that followed this creation were marked by vigorous growth and extension in practically every area (Hall, 1985).

Provision served by voluntary sectors occupied a significant part of British ACE. Voluntary sectors such as the WEA, the Women's Institute, the Pre-School Playgroups Association, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, religious organisations and so on all offer a diversity of formal or informal continuing learning for adults. As Parry

(1993) cited, voluntary organisations in England are categorised in terms of six 'orientations' (interest, service, advocacy, social, community, vocational), illustrating not only their heterogeneity in the English context but also a continuum between voluntary organisations and public education agencies in terms of the nature of the learning activities, formal and informal, undertaken. Voluntary sectors were provided ACE usually through grant support of the central or local government or through a partnership between sectors, possibly with statutory sectors.

The development of the MIs, evening schools and evening institutes, and centres for adults makes the evolution of ACE in England and Wales more clear. Figure 2.1 sketches out this evolution.



**Figure 2.1** The evolution of ACE in England and Wales.  
**Source.** Revised Jennings, 1985, p. 40.

There are two tracks of ACE evolution shown in Figure 2.1. The first one developed from night schools, through evening schools, and evening institutes to community colleges, and adult education institutes. The other one originated from the MIs and developed through the technical colleges to colleges of further education, colleges of higher education and polytechnics, which have mostly been upgraded into new universities after 1988.

Figure 2.1 only roughly describes a part of the evolution of ACE in England and Wales. On the one hand, as the description by the Board of Education indicates, adult education is a complex movement and its origins were not primarily educational but social, religious, and

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industrial (Board of Education, 1930, p. x). On the other hand, in Arthur's view, the system of adult education in England and Wales is a system in change (Arthur, 1992). It is difficult to apply a simple figure to explain a changing system with such complicated origins and developments. It needs more detailed analyses to fully explore the shift in ACE in England and Wales.

Table 2.1 shows the numbers and percentages of those 19 and over who were continuing their education, broken down by age and types of courses in the United Kingdom. Although these statistics cover Scotland and Northern Ireland, it can provide a recent breakdown of ACE for different provisions in England and Wales.



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**Table 2.1** Numbers and percentages continuing their education aged 19 and over, by age and type of courses, 1992/93

PERSONS(1)&PERCENTAGES of the population Home students				
Age at 31 August 1992				
	19-20	21-24	25 & over	All ages(2)
<b>NUMBER (Thousands)</b>				
Total population	1,606	3,575	-	-
<b>FULL-TIME AND SANDWICH STUDENTS</b>				
Schools	5(0.3)	-	-	-
Further education	49(3.1)	36(1.0)	78..	163..
Higher education	327(20.4)	241(6.8)	156..	724..
Universities	150(9.3)	103(2.9)	47..	300..
Undergraduate	150(9.3)	74(2.1)	27..	251..
postgraduate	-	29(0.8)	20..	49..
Polytechnics and other HE estabs	177(11.0)	138(3.9)	109..	424..
Undergraduate	177(11.0)	128(3.6)	97..	402..
Postgraduate	-	10(0.3)	12..	23..
<b>Total full-time and sandwich students</b>	<b>381(23.7)</b>	<b>277(7.8)</b>	<b>234..</b>	<b>892..</b>
<b>PART-TIME STUDENTS</b>				
Further education	194(12.1)	458(12.8)	1,973..	2,625..
Day students	98(6.1)	181(5.1)	809..	1,088..
Adult education centres(3)(4)	31(1.9)	111(3.1)	398..	566..
Other	67(4.2)	71(2.0)	411..	730..
Evening only students	96(6.0)	277(7.8)	1,164..	1,537..
Adult education centres(3)(4)	52(3.2)	180(5.0)	625..	857..
Other	45(2.8)	97(2.7)	540..	682..
Higher education(5)	30(1.9)	71(2.0)	350..	451..
Universities	1(0.1)	6(0.2)	57..	65..
Undergraduate	-	2(0.1)	11..	13..
Postgraduate	-	4(0.1)	47..	51..
Polytechnics and other HE estabs	299(1.8)	60(1.7)	193..	282..
Undergraduate	29(1.8)	57(1.6)	152..	238..
Postgraduate	-	4(0.1)	40..	44..
Open university	-	4(0.1)	100..	104..
<b>Total part-time students</b>	<b>224(14.0)</b>	<b>529(14.8)</b>	<b>2,323..</b>	<b>3,076..</b>
<b>All full-time and part-time students</b>	<b>606(37.7)</b>	<b>807(22.6)</b>	<b>2,558..</b>	<b>3,971..</b>

**Note.** '-' : not applicable; '..' : not available.

(1) Includes sex unknown for Wales and Scotland.

(2) Includes ages unknown for Wales.

(3) Includes estimated age details for 1,473,700 persons aged 16 years or more in adult education centres((England and Wales) enrolments) and non-vocational further education students in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(4) Excludes youth clubs and centres(77,000 in 1984/85 (England)) and an estimated 605,500 students in some courses of further education run by others for whom age details were not available.

(5) Excludes 85,000 (provisional) students enrolled in nursing and paramedical courses at Department of Health establishments.

**Source.** Revised Government Statistical Service, 1995, p. 44.

According to Table 2.1, in terms of ACE, we can obtain the following evidence.

**1 Adults aged 25 and over were in the majority among full-time and sandwich students' groups in further education.**

In general, the scope of adult education excludes full-time students aged 19-21 studying in higher and further education institutions. Therefore, if we exclude the age group of 19-21, we can see that adults aged 25 and over had the largest number in further education. The number was 78,000, compared to 36,000 of those 21-24 and 49,000 of those 19-20. The trend is that more adults study full-time in further education institutions.

**2 Adults aged 25 and over mostly continue their higher education via studying full-time in polytechnics and other higher education establishments.**

The number of adults aged 25 and over studying in polytechnics and other higher education establishments full-time was 109,000. Comparatively, their counterparts studying in universities were 47,000. This fact indicates that more adults continue their study via higher education than via further education (156,000 to 78,000). The majority are in polytechnics and other higher education establishments instead of universities.

**3 Among those over 19, more adults tend to study part-time as their age increases.**

In terms of part-time students, in no matter which kind of course, the older become the greater number. This shows that an increase in age, at least from 19 to 25 and over, adults mostly study part-time in further and higher education institutions. The total number of full-time and sandwich students was 892,000. In contrast, the total number of part-time students was 3,076,000.

**4 In part-time further education, no matter what the age group, more adults study in the evening.**

In further education, the number of part-time evening-only students was 1,537,000. The number of day students was 1,008,000. This reveals that more adults continue their further education part-time in the evening.

Table 1.1 the official British statistics. Although the above courses did not include voluntary institutions or adults who studied in a variety of voluntary institutions, it gives us a picture of the real world of ACE in the UK.

### **2.3 Major Acts and Reports from 1900 to 1998**

This section probes the changes in ACE, focusing on policy orientation in England and Wales from major Acts and Reports. These Acts and Reports include the 1919 Report, the 1944 Education Act, the Ashby Report, the 1973 Russell Report, the 1988 ERA and the 1992 FHEA, all of which have a significant relationship with the British ACE.

The First World War 1914-1918 produced direct impacts on ACE. Take the Adult School Movement, for example. The Men's Schools were hit first, being soon deprived of many of their younger and most effective workers, who volunteered for, or were immediately called up into, the ranks of the Forces. The Women's Schools, too, were rapidly thinned, particularly in view of the darkened streets and the constant alarms. Many closures were inevitable or, even if closure was avoided, regular meetings were suspended; and in some cases the premises themselves were required by the authorities. Among various other activities, which seems almost unaffected by the war, were those of the numbers of Weekend and other Lecture Schools, which continued unabated with audiences that deeply impressed the various lecturers brought in for the purpose (Hall, 1985). In general however, the impact on the enrolments and participation from the war was direct and immediate.

During the inter-war period, there were two major trends in the work of the universities and voluntary bodies. Kelly (1992, p. 285) indicated that 'one, an obvious one, is an increasing acceptance of state aid; the other, perhaps not entirely unconnected with the first, is a tendency for the various forms of adult education to be assimilated to a common pattern'. The increasing acceptance of state aid signifies the possible increasing influence of the government on adult education. This is one of the reasons why the 1919 Report was created. The tendency to create a common pattern for ACE partly resulted from the government's search for convenient management. It was different from the situation of the past. In the pre-

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war period, with its Extension lectures, its WEA tutorial classes, its adult schools, its educational and other settlements, its residential colleges, its working men's colleges, and so forth, ACE was notable for its rich diversity both of form and of motive. The motives of personal culture and personal advancement were of course to be found among students in every form of the organisation, but the tutorial class and the workers' residential colleges arose primarily from the demand for social emancipation; the desire for religious fellowship and religious service dominated the adult schools and their associated colleges, and the YMCA; and religion and social reform joined hands in the educational settlements (Simon, 1992, 285-286).

The impacts of the first World War and the tendencies above provide a background for discussion of the 1919 Report.

### **The 1919 Report**

#### *A brief review of the Report*

The 1919 Report, which was presented to the Prime Minister in 1919 by the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, was an important report about ACE. Its other name was the Smith Report because the president of the Committee was A. L. Smith, Master of Balliol. The Report was a comprehensive survey of the history and organisations of adult education from 1800 to 1919 in Great Britain, and included 13 Chapters. Wiltshire (1980) said that the 1919 Report had been for over half a century the most frequently cited document in the literature of adult education. The 1919 Report made the case for a democratic, involved, self-reliant, participatory, self-fulfilling citizenry within a society which, whilst having common objectives, was open to the development of each individual's potential' (Small, 1975, p. 152).

The 1919 Report had significant implications. According to Wiltshire's introduction, the most striking characteristic of the Report was the sense of discovery and of new educational possibilities which pervaded and inspired the whole document. In addition, it highlighted the social function of adult education and argued that adult education had an instrumental value,

that it was good for something, that it had a product which was of value to society and for which the State should therefore pay (Wiltshire, 1980). A. L. Smith's letter said 'adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong' (The 1919 Report, pp. 4-5). Though Arthur indicated that in England, neither adult vocational training nor formal second chance education was accepted or developed as a means for individual or social advancement until the 1970s, when the oil crisis, the rapid economic decline and radical social unrest changed national perspective (Arthur, 1992, p. 358), the 1919 Report endowed individuals with the right to adult education and gave the responsibility to society. Adult education belonged to everyone instead of to certain specific groups such as the working class or members of religion.

### ***Discussion of the recommendations presented***

The 1919 Report recommended a much larger expenditure of public funds on adult education, and it also made a number of concrete suggestions. According to the Report (pp. 168-178) and Kelly's classification (Kelly, 1973), the main recommendations were:

- (1) That adult education should cater for the varied needs and tastes of the people;
- (2) That local education authorities should establish evening institutes for social, recreational, and educational activities, especially for young people;
- (3) That each university should establish a department of extra-mural adult education, with an academic head;
- (4) That University Extension courses should be aided from Government funds;
- (5) That university should regard the provision of a liberal education for adults as a normal and necessary part of their duties;
- (6) That joint committees of education authorities, universities, and voluntary bodies should be established to develop non-university adult education.

These recommendations disclosed again that the target group of adult education included all people and universities, LEAs and voluntary bodies being the major responsible providers. Establishing extra-mural departments and offering extension courses were the duties of universities and the provision was liberal education. The main duty of LEAs was to establish evening institutes with broader courses, consisting of social, recreational, and educational

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activities. As to university adult education, this was the responsibility of joint committees organised by education authorities, universities, and voluntary bodies. It is clear that LEAs played the prime role in developing multi-functional adult education by cooperating with universities and voluntary bodies. The creation of university extra-mural departments, bringing together extension and tutorial class teaching, was a particularly influential development (Kelly, 1973, p. 114).

### *Remarks on the 1919 Report*

In conformity to the British tradition, the 1919 Report focused provision of ACE on liberal education. Charnley and Stock (1988) stated that the Report identified the basis of British tradition, namely, the importance of the individual, his or her educational potential as a person, and the large and important place in the development of adult education for LEAs in cooperation with the voluntary organisations. The chief spirit of liberal education has been protecting the individual's right to learn. As mentioned previously, the WEA was set up in 1903 and since 1908 the government has given grant aid to the 'Responsible Bodies' ( the university and the WEA) to enable them to provide liberal education. A WEA-universities-liberal studies-non-vocational-non-LEA axis was further strengthened with the foundation of the self-proclaimed 'World Association of Adult Education' in 1919 and of the British Institute of Adult Education in 1921. In 1921, the President of the Board of Education set up an Adult Education Committee to promote and develop liberal adult education; to bring together national organisations concerned with the provision of adult education; to secure mutual help and avoid waste of effort; to further the establishment of voluntary organisations and their cooperation with the LEAs; and to advise the Board (Fieldhouse, 1996, p. 47). Those policies disclosed the government's attempt to develop ACE via focus on liberal provision and the cooperative approach. As Fieldhouse (1990) claimed, the government had taken a proprietary interest in this provision and had regarded it as important for maintaining its ideological hegemony, countering the influence of alien ideologies particularly among the working class and leaders of the Labour Movement as a vehicle for social control. In terms of its purposes and functions, according to Fieldhouse (1990), Wiltshire (1980),

Charnley and Stock (1988), ACE was not only educational but political and social. In other words, the ACE might be influenced by political, social, and educational factors.

The 1919 Report gave the LEAs a host of duties to provide a nonvocational ACE by establishing evening institutions which had well-developed bases. The recommendations resulted in the increase of evening institutions. After the presentation of the 1919 Report, there were two organisations which influenced the progress of LEAs in developing nonvocational activities. These two organisations, set up in 1921, were the British Institute of Adult Education and the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education (Jennings, 1985). The 1919 Report urged cooperation between LEAs and the other providers of adult education, the universities and voluntary sectors, but it did not explicitly recognise the need for a body to promote on a national scale the cooperation seen as so essential at a lower level (Hutchinson, 1971, p. 9). It was largely due to the efforts of Lord Haldane and Albert Mansbridge that the British Institute of Adult Education was established.

The 1919 Report, which was based upon the British tradition and presented just after the First World War, suffered from the impact of factors inside and outside the context in which it was developed. For instance, how to promote knowledge of the public to reconstruct society and re-stimulate the economic development destroyed by the war through ACE, was urgent work. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the 1919 Report was completed by the Ministry of 'Reconstruction' in lieu of the Board of Education. The above factors could have affected the Report and ACE policy after 1919. Economic recession during the inter-war years and in the 1920s and 1930s made most of the idealism of the 1919 Report appear over-confident and out of touch with the problem of mounting a universal scheme of lifelong learning on meagre resources and a flimsy institutional structure (Else, 1986). The optimism and vision of the 1919 Report might be contrasted with the bleakness and uncertainties of the next 20 years - in respect of economic disasters, unemployment and a rapidly deteriorating international situation. Some specific recommendations, notably the establishment of university extra-mural departments, were carried out, albeit in a more restricted way than the Committee had envisaged (Gordon, Aldrich, and Dean, 1991, p. 220).

Fordham (1976, p. 61) argued that the adult education movement of the 1920s & 30s was openly on the side of liberal democracy and egalitarian ideas. Even in the 1950s, when many thought that the social purpose of the movement had been lost, the issue aroused loud discussion. Both the viewpoints of Elsey (1986) and Fordham (1976) indicated that ACE policy was multi-functional and *vis-a-vis* it might be affected by multiple factors.

The establishment of extra-mural departments and the increasing involvement of LEAs in ACE were two major features around 1919 and onwards. The work of the WEA, YMCA, YWCA, the Working Men's and Women's Colleges and other long-term providers of adult education continued. In 1920 the YWCA sponsored its first residential college for working women which in 1926 was established as Hillcroft at Surbiton in Surrey. In 1924 the London Working Men's College reasserted its independence from the London City Council. In 1927 Coleg Harlech was opened as a residential college for Wales, with financial support provided by the Board of Education, LEAs, and trade unions (Gordon, Aldrich, and Dean, 1991).

The increasing involvement of LEAs in ACE was active and positive. Around 1924-25, according to the survey conducted by the British Institute of Adult Education, local authorities involved themselves in adult education by subsidising the appointment of full-time Extension tutorial-class tutors (Dorset and Staffordshire), by awarding bursaries for summer schools (Dorset and West Riding), by awarding scholarships to residential colleges (Kent and West Riding), and by publishing handbooks giving details of adult educational facilities in the local areas. A report prepared by the Adult Education Committee in 1933 provided a survey of the development of local authority provision of adult education in the early 1930s. In England and Wales, 63 county boroughs at this time were providing nonvocational classes for adults. For the most part, these were in practical or semi-recreational subjects, and were held in evening institutes or technical colleges, but some authorities had separate adult institutes or adult departments. In the year 1929-1930, the local authorities in England and Wales, outside London, organised 11,142 nonvocational adult classes, of which 29 per cent were in academic subjects (mainly languages, elocution and drama, literature, and natural science), 62 per cent in practical subjects (mainly domestic



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arts, handicrafts and health subjects), and 9 per cent in recreational subjects (including music, folk-dancing, and physical training) (Simon, 1992). Accordingly, nonvocational courses dominated the subjects list rather than vocational ones.

The motives of adult learners changed in the 1920s and especially in the 1930s, compared with the period before 1920. Simon (1992) showed that the driving forces of social reform and religious service became noticeably weaker, and the motives of personal culture reasserted within the limits of the Board's regulations, came closer to each other, and found themselves, to some extent, overlapping in the provision of general cultural courses for general audiences. One of the main factors which fostered the change of motives was the long-term economic recession throughout the 1930s, starting in 1928. As Hall (1985) noted, the task of helping the unemployed was being actively continued, not only by allotment schemes but by help in occupational centres, the organisation of food supplies at wholesale cost prices, recreation classes, and provision of books. Recession decreased the enrolments in Adult Schools. During 1935 the total membership of the National Adult School Union was stated to be about 34,000 (one person, it was calculated, for every 1,313 of the population of Great Britain), and that the number of affiliated Schools stood at some 1,200. (An interesting comparison could be made by reference to figures published in 1927, namely 1,450 Schools and 50,000 members.) Numerically, at least, the Movement was clearly in recession; in 1937 it would be stated that the number of Schools stood at 1,055, and in 1942 at only 696 (Hall, 1985).

The involvement of LEAs in ACE was enhanced by the following 1944 Education Act, which endowed LEAs with legal powers and obligations to make and facilitate the provision.

### **The 1944 Education Act**

#### *A brief review of the Act*

The 1944 Education Act was not enacted particularly for ACE but for the whole educational system in Britain. The Act was arranged in 5 Parts containing 122 Sections and 9 Schedules. Charnley and Stock (1988, p. 25) pointed out that the 1944 Education Act was not

particularly helpful to adults, because its main concern was the education of children. Namely, the Act was more concerned with the system of initial education. Nevertheless, the present structure for adult education in Britain derived from the Act (Even, 1983; Small, 1973).

Adult education was not directly mentioned but subsumed under further education in the 1944 Education Act. Further education was listed in Part 2, from Sections 41 to 47. Part 2 consisted of the general duties of LEAs, schemes for further education, county colleges, duty to attend county colleges, administrative provisions for securing attendance at county colleges, enforcement of attendance at county colleges, and interim provisions for further education. Further education was divided into two categories. One was full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age. The other was leisure-time occupation, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as were suited to their requirement, for any persons over compulsory school age who were able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose (Dent, 1968, p. 35). The Russell Report showed that there were two ends pertaining to further education in this Act. One was vocational and the other was personal, social, cultural, and non-vocational (DES, 1973). The scope of further education encompassed ACE in the 1944 Education Act.

LEAs took on most of the responsibilities for fulfilling further education under the regulations of the 1944 Education Act. According to Arthur (1992), the Act charged local authorities under Section 7 to 'contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of community'. Sections 41-47 mentioned the duties of LEAs in providing and carrying out further education. In the 1944 Education Act, LEAs were the main provider of further education, playing a leading role in this field. According to Kelly's interpretation, the 1944 Education Act placed firmly on the shoulders of LEAs the responsibility of securing adequate provision for further education including 'leisure time occupation' (Kelly, 1992). Thomson (1992) directly indicated that the 1944 Education Act, which created the post-war structure for adult education, empowered local authorities to support voluntary association providers, but it did so in very unspecific terms.

***Some practices after the 1944 Act***

Economic achievement provided a good opportunity to develop ACE further. Evens (1987) said economic affluence permitted a modest expansion of adult education particularly from 1958 to 1968. General adult education was modestly favoured during the 1960s. Gelpi (1980) also noted that at the time of the economic boom of the 1960s the ideology of lifelong education = general education reflected in effect the necessity for the rapid training of workers at average and higher levels in the vocational field.

ACE institutions grew after the 1944 Education Act. After the Second World War, there was a striking expansion in evening institutes' range of work as they began to offer facilities for recreational activities and craft subjects as well as a few courses in liberal subjects (Lowe, 1970). From 1946 to 1952, students enrolled in evening institutes were the most numerous, compared with technical colleges and other sectors (37,992 in 1946-7, 45,752 in 1951-2) and its growth was obvious (Gosden and Sharp, 1978). In 1967-68 there were approximately 7,500 evening institutes providing vocational classes, nonvocational and a mixture of vocational and nonvocational. At least 2/3 of all the nonvocational classes in England and Wales met in evening institutes. Jennings (1981, p. 7) showed that there were four major institutional innovations in British education in the last half century; and all related in varying degrees to the continuing education of adults:

- (1) The institution of short-term residential colleges in the immediate post-war period;
- (2) The development, since the mid-1960s, of the polytechnic sector of higher education;
- (3) The foundation in 1969 of the Open University;
- (4) The accelerating growth of multi-purpose educational institutions usually from community colleges.

In terms of ACE, the above points 1, 3, and 4 are noteworthy. Short-term residential colleges have served a more flexible style of provision, compared with long-term residential colleges. So far, there are 35 short-term residential colleges in England and Wales. The foundation of the Open University has opened a wide door to adults who are interested in continuing their education at the higher education level. It is a typical model of 'education without wall'. The

accelerating growth of multi-purpose educational institutions enhanced the characteristic of diversity. Grassroots needs could be satisfied through these institutions.

***Remarks on the 1944 Act***

There were external environmental factors affecting ACE when the 1944 Education Act was enacted. Evans (1983) argued that the impact of war and the effects of pressure group activity both influenced the 1944 Education Act. The impact of World War 2 on ACE was considerable. It encouraged Armed Forces' demands for adult education, which were met through the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA), which was set up in 1943. Such education offered an hour of a soldier's week to discussion on current affairs. War might not only foster adult education in the armed forces but might also make society call for more skilled people to fight the war or reconstruct society. Adult education pressure groups also might have significant influences on the 1944 Education Act. These pressure groups consisted of the WEA, the British Institute of Adult Education, the Council for Education Advance, the National Union of Teachers, the National Council of Women and so on. The WEA's national officers during the latter part of the war led to the setting up of a National Foundation of Adult Education (NFAE) to act as a general advisory body for adult education and to promote understanding and cooperation between the various bodies engaged in adult education. The NFAE was constituted in June 1946 and by the following January, 68 LEAs, 8 universities, 3 university colleges and 13 voluntary societies had responded to invitations to join (Fieldhouse, 1996). Because of the overlap, the NFAE was merged with the British Institute of Adult Education to become the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) which, soon, started to play a significant role as a professional organisation in the ACE.

Like the first one, the Second World War (1939-1945) had wrought havoc on ACE. The First World War reduced the total membership of the Adult School Movement by about half; the Second reduced it by even more than half. As Hall (1985, pp. 162-163) argued, first, it provided a ground of contention which disturbed many Schools. Pacifism and the problem of the conscientious objector proved in many cases too difficult for even the broad minded Adult School fellowship. Secondly, of the mass of men who went into the armed forces,

many never returned, while of those who did come back many did so with an altered outlook. Certain similar consequences and problems faced the Movement during and in the wake of the Second World War; and by then, with its already reduced strength, the Movement was much less able to surmount and survive them.

Certain political and economic factors notably affected ACE during the period after 1944. The Second World War had produced a feeling of complete frustration. The American postwar loan of nearly \$4 billion intended to help put Britain on its feet and to last until 1951, suddenly all but disappeared. As Simon (1991) stated, as early as March 1946 Winston Churchill had made his Fulton speech, heralding the unleashing of the Cold War - to culminate, in 1950, with the outbreak of the Korean War. The result was that official attitudes now began to reflect the sharp, worldwide, political struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. The rate of annual increase of budgetary expenditure on education declined during these years, showing the increasing squeeze on education in the last years of the Labour government. The rate was on the wane dropping from 44.5 million in 1948-49 to 19.5 million in the following year (1949-50), to only several million in 1950-51 and further down to 7.5 million in 1951-52. Simon (1991) pointed out that this sudden reduction was the direct result of a new economic (or financial) crisis in the summer of 1949, when the country again faced bankruptcy. The immediate problems were solved by the massive devaluation of the pound in September - to an exchange value of \$2.40 from \$4.03. As a result, the year 1950 saw a downturn in numbers of adult education students and courses which affected both LEAs and voluntary provision, and continued in many instances throughout the decade. Gordon, Aldrich, and Dean (1991) also explained that the decline might be attributed in part to economic and financial problems which were particularly severe in the period 1949-51, and to the general attitude and particular response of the central government. Although after 1944 the Ministry of Education continued to give direct financial assistance to the extra-mural departments, the WEA and other 'responsible bodies', even by the mid-1960s the central grant was still less than three quarters of a million pounds per annum, less indeed than the cost of a single mile of motorway. Although since the 1944 Act, LEAs have had a statutory duty to provide the further education of adults, due to its lack

of reinforcing regulations, politicians and officers continue to describe adult education as a discretionary service and to treat it as an easy target for sudden cuts when budgets are tight. This weakness in legislation has resulted in an enormous variation in the range, volume and quality of offers available to adults in the different parts of the country (Tuckett, 1996). Maybe this was one of the reasons for the presentation of the Ashby Report, which stressed the financing of adult education.

### **The Ashby Report**

The Ashby Report was published by the committee under the chairmanship of Dr Eric Ashby in 1954 and was entitled 'The Organisation and Finance of Adult Education in England and Wales'. Unlike the 1944 Education Act, the Ashby Report focused on adult education and discussed the problems of finance. The objectives of Ashby's committee were to review the present system, by which the extra-mural departments of universities, the WEA and the other responsible bodies provided local facilities for adult education, with special reference to the conditions under which the facilities were organised and were aided by grants from public funds, and to make recommendations (Stephens, 1990, p. 6). Besides those recommendations dealing directly with finance, the following four were noteworthy (Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1990, p. 48):

- (1) The present partnership in adult education between voluntary bodies, universities, local education authorities and the Ministry should be preserved but it should continue to be reviewed from time to time (paragraphs 83-86);
- (2) The Ministry's policy over adult education should always be such as to encourage voluntarism (paragraph 91);
- (3) The Workers' Educational Association districts should be encouraged to preserve their status as responsible bodies and continue both to organise and to provide classes (paragraphs 87-90);
- (4) Local education authorities should be encouraged to aid adult education by contributing toward the administrative costs of responsible bodies and by providing accommodations free of charge, in addition to the direct provision they themselves make (paragraphs 98-100).

From the recommendations, it is clear that the Ashby Report highlighted the cooperation among different providers of ACE, especially the voluntary ones. These suggestions addressed the shortcomings of the 1944 Education Act, which had not explained specifically how to support voluntary association providers.

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Social change had an impact on ACE in the 1950s. The 1950s saw the continuation of a long-term secular trend in the decline of the basic industries employing a high contingent of manual labour, and in enhanced investment in new industries involving the application of modern scientific and technical knowledge (Simon, 1991). Simon (1991, p. 161) concluded that the result was a long-term shift in occupational structure which inevitably had repercussions on education. The number of unskilled workers (social class 5) showed a massive decline (by almost 1 million or 42 per cent) during the decade. At the other end of the social spectrum, those categories such as social class 1 (professional, etc.) in the census returns of 1951 and 1961 showed a substantial increase. Growth was most rapid among white-collar employees: scientists and engineers, for instance, more than doubled (from 187,000 to 387,000); draughtsmen and laboratory technicians increased by nearly 40 percent. This striking growth rate reflected the needs of a modern economy and was certainly a main factor for raising educational aspirations. Thus, ACE had been promoted gradually into an instrument for developing a modern economy and to satisfy individual educational aspirations.

### **The 1973 Russell Report**

#### *A brief review of the Report*

The Russell Report was finished by a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Lionel Russell in 1973. The Report was divided into 3 Parts and 433 Paragraphs. Adding the supplement on Matters peculiar to Wales, the Appendices, Acknowledgements and Index, it comprised 331 pages. Its three major Parts were the assessment of need, the review of existing provision, and the future of adult education. According to the terms of reference, the Russell Report had three objectives (DES, 1973, p. A3):

- (1) To assess the need for and to review the provision of non-vocational adult education in England and Wales;
- (2) To consider the appropriateness of existing educational, administrative and financial policies;
- (3) To make recommendations with a view to obtaining the most effective and economical deployment of available resources to enable adult education to make its proper contribution to the national system of education conceived of as a process obtaining through life.

Manifestly, the Report focused on non-vocational adult education in England and Wales, assessing the need for and reviewing the existing provisions and policies so as to make recommendations.

***Discussion of the recommendations presented***

The recommendations of the Russell Report were very broad. Regarding the general structure, the Report recommended 'adult education should continue to be a partnership between statutory and voluntary bodies. The LEAs should be the main provider and should take the initiative in cooperative planning' (Paragraphs, 148-154). According to the Report's suggestions, the system of adult education should combine statutory and voluntary bodies and LEAs should play the prime role in their cooperation with other providers, for example, the WEA. As for the 1944 Education Act, the LEAs were still the major providers. According to Hughes, many recommendations of the Report were accordingly designed to achieve a better balance of adult education provision between articulate demand and individual and social needs-remedial and 'second chance' education for the individual and the needs of the individual in society, 'role' education for voluntary and public service, social and political and community education (Hughes, 1977, p. 284). This was the reason why the Russell Report emphasised adult education for the disadvantaged and generated this greatest of the significant points that Kelly described (Kelly, 1992). The Report also stressed workers' education, of which the WEA was the main provider, and adult education in relation to industry. The Report made a significant contribution to the growth of the nonvocational ACE provision served by the LEAs. As Tuckett (1996) points out, during the immediate post-war era, LEA provision for adults expanded rapidly, doubling during the period 1950-70, with a growth in the arts, in new leisure activities, in the study of modern languages. A major reassessment of LEA strategy took place during the 1970s and 1980s, prompted by the Russell Report on 'nonvocational' adult education.

One of the most central recommendations of the Russell Report was that there should be a new National Development Council, which would advise on national policy in order to secure permanent national backing (Dees, 1973). In 1977, the Department of Education and



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Science accepted the recommendation and appointed Richard Hoggart to chair an Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE). The establishment of the ACACE was a new landmark. As it promoted and studied the formulation and practice of policy in ACE. Above all, the ACACE enlarged the scope of traditional adult education by it with combining 'continuing education' together. The changes in term and scope may symbolise a shift in ideas and policy.

The trends of the ACE after the Russell Report were noteworthy. For instance, the gradual decline in economic development since 1970 had an impact on ACE. As Gelpi (1980) commented, during the period of unemployment, the ideology of lifelong education was seen as providing training for work and as a response to unemployment. Elsey (1986, p. 11) pointed out that economic and political events had overtaken the community and welfare-service orientations of the Russell Report not so much in form but more in terms of dynamic thrust as the centre of gravity in education and employment policy-making shifted towards worker training. The budget for ACE was affected as well. In the mid 1970s, adult education accounted for a mere 1.1% of the total education budget. In order to improve manpower training so as to stimulate economic regeneration, the Department of Employment and the Industrial Training Boards set up the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), which had been working since 1974 on the basis of the Employment Act of 1973. Its main purpose was to run numerous public employment and training services.

### *Remarks on the Russell Report*

The Russell Report had significant influences on ACE. Charnley and Stock (1988) stressed that the Russell Report was a turning point in education system. It contributed to a re-focus on the ACE, encouraging those in charge of public expenditure to concentrate once more on socially committed, political work with disadvantaged groups, and to devote more resources and energy to the needs of the 'adult education untouchable' (Fieldhouse, 1996). Kelly (1973, p. 122) also commented that 'the historic significance of the Russell Report may lie in the way in which it has sought to change the emphasis of adult education and to make new resources and new energies available for the education of those who have hitherto been

neglected'. What Kelly emphasised was that the Report suggested adult education for the disadvantaged and gave the WEA responsibilities to concentrate on 'priority areas' ie, education for the socially and culturally deprived. If we compare the 1919 with the 1973 Reports, ACE seemed to have strayed somewhat from its traditional path and the Russell Committee attempted to re-establish some of its early priorities. Although the numbers following adult education increased in the inter-war years, there were fears that the early missionary zeal was waning (Brook, 1991). The Russell Report therefore linked itself to the 1919 Report and indicated the priority of liberal adult education again.

There are some criticisms of the Russell Report. It presented the post-war success of adult education but it was criticised for its failure to seize the opportunity to recommend the principle of adult entitlement to continuing education. George Wedell commented in the 'Times Education Supplement' on 30 March 1973 that 'the way the Russell Committee ducked the issue of permanent education is disappointing. The report still regards adult education as a remedial activity rather than as total of every citizen's educational experience'. The Report contained a thorough review of existing provision but largely failed to provide the leadership or the vision to build a new beginning, perhaps because the Committee adopted the pragmatic strategy of proposing only what seemed politically feasible, in the hope that its proposals would be implemented (Fieldhouse, 1996). It seemed that the Russell Report did not clearly realise the practical situations of ACE. Evans (1987, pp. 100-108) directly indicated that the Report made the following misjudgments:

- (1) It failed to change perceptions of adult education and provided it with a clear image;
- (2) It failed to understand that education's weaknesses were substantially rooted in its diversity;
- (3) It had an antique air at a time when adult educators and even politicians were beginning to conceive of permanent education;
- (4) It failed to excite adult educators and so offered a pretext for policy makers to neglect the report's significance.

The Russell Report made suggestions based on the nonvocational adult education tradition; however, the influences inside and outside its context, such as economic recession gave it

'an antique air'. The growing recession resulted in the government having to pay more attention to vocational training and to cut budgets. In Thomson's view, the timing of the Russell Report was unfortunate. The funding cuts and political reversals of the 1970s and the 1980s imposed terrible pressures upon both mainstream adult education and its voluntary fringe and stifled innovation (Thomson, 1992). According to Marten Shipman, the mid 1970s was a period of optimism which resulted from economic prosperity and which directly led to educational expansion; whereas the post-mid 1970s phase was marred by economic crisis, rising unemployment, and a fall in school rolls culminating in overall scepticism, which was reflected in Prime Minister Callaghan's October speech at Ruskin College in 1976. The mood of educational policy-making during these two phases might aptly be summed up as 'from broad tripartite educational consensus to narrow conflicting and fragmented educational needs and interests' (Hough, 1984). The above situation created mainly by economic factors have resulted in less than ideal fulfilment of the Russell Report's recommendations.

Educational statistics can provide a picture of the change in ACE from the 1900s to the 1970s. For instance, in 1910, total Adult School membership stood at something over 100,000; but in the 1920s it was down to 50,000; in 1939 to 33,000; in 1946 to 13,000; in 1955 to 9,000; in 1962 to 6,000; and in 1970 to 3,250. The figures for Schools were similarly disturbing: 1,800 (1910), 1,450 (the 1920s), 1,150 (1939), 700 (1946), 475 (1955), 375 (1962), 230 (1970) (Hall, 1985, p. 164). The numbers of ACE and School memberships declined steadily after 1910. The factors producing this reduction are complex. As discussed earlier, we know that these changes were influenced by various factors, whether political, economic, social, educational, and so forth.

## **The 1988 Education Reform Act**

### *A brief review of the Act*

The 1988 ERA was steered through Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker. It had 238 Sections and 13 Schedules. The Act represented the most radical review of the education system in England and Wales since the 1944 Education Act. As

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Maclure stressed, it altered the basic power structure of the education system (Maclure, 1992). The Act has increased the powers of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, decreased the powers of the LEAs and given great autonomy to schools and governing bodies.

The ERA may have affected ACE although it did not directly mention it. The Unit for the Development of ACE (UDACE) (1988) stated that the Act did offer opportunities to improve the range and nature of education and training available to adults, provided that the LEAs and other organisations took appropriate steps promptly. The UDACE showed that adult learners and the provision available for them might be affected by at least 80 of the Act's 238 Sections and 13 Schedules (UDACE, 1988). ACE was included in the umbrella term, 'further education', like the 1944 Education Act. The content directly relating to further education. The meaning of further education was clarified. Further education was defined as full- and part-time education and training ( rather than higher education ) for those who had left school and were beyond the compulsory school age, and who might be employed or unemployed; and as organised leisure-time occupation in connection with the provision of such education and training (Maclure, 1992, p. 85). Distinctly, this definition of further education took in ACE. According to the explanation of the subsequent DES Circular 19/89, the ACE and the ERA, the scope of the ACE covered:

- (1) General education, whether for personal, professional, recreational, or other purposes;
- (2) Second chance education to promote access to further education and training, higher education or employment;
- (3) Continuing education to up-date skills and knowledge.

The scope of the above might comprise nonvocational (1), vocational (2 and 3), and adult basic education (2). Vocational adult education dominated the content.

The providers of ACE were as follows:

- (1) Adult education centres;
- (2) Adult education institutes and colleges;
- (3) Community schools and community colleges;

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- (4) Colleges of further and higher education;
- (5) Polytechnics;
- (6) Universities;
- (7) A wide variety of voluntary and other bodies.

Comparatively, in view of the emphasis on vocational ACE, colleges of further education mainly providing vocational courses have thrived; Conversely, adult education centres, institutes and colleges, and community schools and colleges, which traditionally offered nonvocational courses, have gradually lost their leading role as providers.

### *The role change of the LEAs*

The new definition of the role and responsibility of the LEAs in post-school education was another salient point of the ERA. Since the 1919 Report, the LEAs had been empowered with most of the responsibilities for further education (including adult education). In the ERA, Section 120 gave the LEAs a general duty to provide adequate facilities for further education, and a discretionary power to secure the provision of higher education 'appropriate to the needs of their areas' (Maclure, 1992). The Section removed from the LEAs the duty to secure the provision of higher education within their areas. Arthur (1992, p. 360) also pointed out that one important effect of the Act was to move LEAs away from direct control of the education service and towards a more strategic role, setting frameworks within which institutions would operate with greater autonomy. The new initiative, Local Management of Schools (LMS) is a good example.

The LMS was one of the great changes the 1988 ERA introduced. The ERA introduced the LMS as a major plank of the legislation. It has three components (Emerson, 1991, pp. 9-10): (1) greater financial delegation; (2) funding by formula; (3) control over most aspects of personnel management. Though primary and secondary schools are the main schools involved, the LMS includes local management of colleges of further education (LMC). Since colleges have been empowered more autonomy in management, LEAs would decrease their leadership.

The power of the LEAs declined partly because of the New Right critique. The New Right critique of local government developed in certain wings of the Conservative party in the 1970s and 1980s. It claimed that local government was often not representative of the community. Electoral turnouts were low, many local elections were fought on national, not local, issues and the elections were dominated by a public sector workforce. Although Lawton (1992) argued that doctrines of the New Right would not have become part of the political debate of the 1980s without M Thatcher as the Prime Minister, the fact was that by the end of the 1980s, the Thatcher Government had substantially reduced the powers of local government. In the past, taking ACE as an example, the LEAs had offered most of the significant provision since the First World War. The number of adult learners increased from about 800,000 in 1944 to 1,500,000 in 1966 and to over 2,000,000 in 1980. Adult students attending local authority classes were about six times the number in university extra-mural and WEA classes (O'Hare, 1981).

As to policy and planning, the Act was likely to bring about major changes in the scale, nature and quality of education provision for adults. The three driving forces for change were (UDACE, 1988, p. 4):

- (1) The scheme of financial delegation;
- (2) The constitution of governing bodies;
- (3) The articles of government of the various institutions.

The above three points mostly relates to the new LMS. The LMS which covers colleges of the LEAs (Local Management of Colleges) gives colleges much more autonomy, especially in the financial area. Maden (1992) raised a major policy implication of the LMS: responding to clients- the LMS suggests that schools should become more responsive to their clients - parents, pupils, the local community and employers. In terms of the LMC, under the ERA, every LEA had a delegation scheme, agreed to by the DFE/Welsh Office, setting out how their further education colleges would be funded, using a formula based on weighted numbers of full-time equivalent students and an agreed unit of resource. Each delegation scheme was unique so as to reflect local circumstances but would follow common rules

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(Graystone, 1992). In 1992, the further education corporations would be set up, run by new governing bodies and eligible to receive transitional funding. On 1 April 1993, the corporations would become independent institutions and assets and staff would be transferred to them from the LEAs. Accordingly, the power of administration is seemingly decentralised to each college via the multiple composition of in-corporation. To reflect local characteristics was to be emphasised and the employers' influence in colleges would increase. In contrast, the LEAs' leadership of colleges would decline. The greater involvement of employers in colleges implies that further education colleges will be kept closely linked with the labour market.

### *Some practices after the ERA*

HMI's report of 1991

Educational statistics can provide useful information about the practices of ACE after the ERA. In 1991, Her Majesty's Inspectorate published a report reviewing the provision for adults who returned to continue their education after the completion of their initial education and training. This survey covered over 400 institutions which provided adult education in the period of 1986 to 1990. Though two of the years pre-dated 1988 in this period, it could offer some useful information. In 1986-90, the courses for adults could be classified as (HMI, 1991, p. 2):

- (1) Work related, role related, or concerned with direct progression to further or higher education;
- (2) Adult learning which was basic, compensatory or special in some sense;
- (3) That primarily concerned with general education.

The above three categories presented only a general picture. In these categories, basic, compensatory or special adult learning consisted of adult literacy and numeracy, provision for bilingual adults and for those with special education needs. General education contained non-vocational provision in the humanities, arts and crafts, modern languages, community languages, English, Welsh, the performing arts, science, music, health and fitness.

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### **Sargant's survey of 1991**

Sargant conducted a survey of the adult learning and leisure of 4,608 people aged 17 and over, by interview in Britain in 1990. Some of its findings were (Sargant, 1991):

- (1) One-quarter of all adults were current or recurrent students;
- (2) Educational institutions, whether universities, polytechnics, colleges or adult centres were still the main venue for adult students;
- (3) One-quarter named further education or technical colleges as providers, followed by 15% mentioning adult education centres or evening institutes, 10% the local school and 9% the LEA or local council;
- (4) Vocational-related subjects did in fact dominate the list in this order: vocation qualification (9%), foreign languages (7%), computer studies (8%), engineering and electronics (7%), shorthand and typing (6%), business administration and management (6%).

The findings above revealed that the search for continuing learning remained popular among adults. Among varied institutions, further education and technical colleges were both principal providers. This fact meant that practical considerations were the prime motives for most adult learners. So, it was not surprising that this survey found that vocational-related subjects did dominate the list. As Sargant explained, that local colleges had become main providers from 1980 to 1990 was partly due to the increasing interest in pursuing vocational courses, and was also likely to reflect the opening up of further education to the whole adult age-range (Sargant, 1991).

### ***Remarks on the ERA***

No matter whether the influences were from the ERA itself or from the environment, the evidence clearly showed the shifts in ACE after 1979. The Act clarified the definition and scope of further education as defined by the 1944 Education Act. Besides, the change in the LEAs' role and responsibility made the LEAs focus more attention on local-based education, such as community education instead of higher education. Sargant's findings (1991) that local colleges were the major providers of the ACE suggest a causal relationship with these changes. In addition, the increase in enrolment in vocational-related courses indicated something significant as well. It seemed that more adult learners craved practical and skill-related courses and qualifications to help them in their search for jobs. This generalisation



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is quite credible because the unemployed were continuing to increase. Additionally, nonvocational provision was less available since the government had gradually highlighted the economic function of ACE provision after the 1970s.

Caldwell (1990) perceived after the state's restructuring of ACE, three trends:

- (1) A decline in the traditional ACE;
- (2) The rise of vocationalism;
- (3) Shifting centre/local relations.

The trends above can be interpreted as follows. The state's advocacy of vocationalism, eg, the MSC had encouraged learners to seek further vocation-oriented studies and relatively, traditional liberal adult education was on the wane. Vocationalism was not only an ideology but furthered the practical values ACE had emphasised, mostly for economic reasons. On the one hand, the recession affected the motives of adult learners and on the other, affected the budgets that funded the ACE via the decrease of public expenditure. The budget shortage of the LEAs led to the raising of fees (self-financing) for learning, which would be likely to discourage adult learners who had suffered the effects of the recession. This was one of the factors that resulted in the overall enrolment gradually decreasing from 1983 to 1990 (from 3,175,979 to 3,116,651). The most salient trait of the ERA was the deprivation of the LEAs' powers. Consequently, more policy directions from the DFE could be expected as well as a change in the relations between the LEAs and the central government, as the third trend listed by Caldwell (1990) suggests.

### **The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act**

The 1992 FHEA was particularly enacted on behalf of further and higher education. It was passed on 6 March 1992 and the majority of its provision took effect from April 1993. In the past, further and higher education were regulated together with initial education, such as in the 1944 Education Act and the 1988 ERA. As Powell emphasised, there were worthwhile opportunities created for adults. The FHEA has occasioned great public interest in the

education of adults and has engendered considerable debate in both Houses of Parliament on issues important to adult education (Powell, 1992).

***Two new roles: Further Education Funding Councils and Higher Education Funding Councils***

The 1992 FHEA has resulted in a reorganisation of post-school education in England and Wales. The Act removed further education from local authority control and set up the FEFCs. It also disestablished the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Universities Funding Council by replacing them with Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs). As with the ERA, the LEAs' powers and duties have been decreased and their role has been changed. Brewer (1993) pointed out that the FHEA has removed a great chunk of adult education from the remit of the LEA, which was left to provide the non-vocational and recreational classes. The following original duties were removed:

- (1) The statutory duty to secure sufficient full-time education for those in the 16-19 age group;
- (2) The statutory duty to secure adequate facilities for the provision of certain aspects of further education for part-time students over the age of 16, and full-time students over the age of 19;
- (3) Most existing further education and sixth-form colleges under LEAs' control obtained independent corporate status.

The decrease in the LEAs' duties towards and powers over further education was a radical shift. Before the FHEA, no matter the 1919 Report, the 1944 Education Act, the Russell Report and the ERA, the LEAs were the major providers of ACE. The FHEA deprived the LEAs of their significant role in providing ACE. As Arthur complained, the FHEA has removed key areas of adult provision from local education authority control, and left the future of traditional non-certificated adult education in considerable doubt (Arthur, 1992).

The DFE Circular No 1/93 highlighted the function of the LEAs in further education. It said 'the duty placed upon LEAs by the Education Act 1944 is changed only in its scope, not in its substance'. According to Sections 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the FHEA, the LEAs' duty is to secure the provision for their area of adequate facilities for courses not following within Schedule

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2. LEAs can offer further education including vocational, social, physical and recreational training, as well as organised leisure-time occupation provided in association with such activities. As the previous Minister of State, Tim Boswell indicated, the duties of LEAs might be characterised as being generally of a more local nature and responsive to specific local concerns. This covers general educational and recreational interests (Boswell, 1993, p. 266). However, the University and College Lecturer' Union (1993) stressed that, after the FHEA, primarily 'vocational courses would be funded through the new national FEFCs. Other so-called "nonvocational education" courses, would be left to over-stretched LEAs to provide'.

According to the researcher's interviews at stage 1, most institutions have increased relationships with the FEFCs but decreased those with the LEAs. One interviewee at a community college reported that 'their college's main work at this moment is how to survive, how to keep stability, and how to offer services'. These three 'Ses' show the decline of traditional local ACE institutions as well as their uncertain role in nonvocational adult education. Besides these designated funded institutions: the six long term residential colleges for adults in England, the WEA, and the four specialist adult colleges in London ( the City Literary Institute, Morley College, the Mary Ward Centre and the Working Men's College), institutions which serve non-Schedule 2 provision might suffer more financial problems.

### *The funded courses*

The FHEA mentioned ACE directly. In Charter 1 of Part 1, it empowered each FEFC to secure adequate post 16 provision in their areas, including (DFE, 1992):

- (1) Part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons over compulsory school age;
- (2) Full-time education suitable to the requirements of persons who have attained the age of nineteen years.

Compared with previous Acts and Reports, the FHEA's regulations were more concrete. In Schedule 2, it clearly listed the funded courses of further education (Powell ,1992, p. 7):

- (1) Courses leading to vocational qualifications recognised by the Secretary of State;

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- (2) Courses leading to GCSE, A-level and AS-level qualifications;
- (3) Recognised courses providing access to higher education;
- (4) Courses preparing students for other courses which fall into categories (1) to (3);
- (5) Courses for basic literacy in English;
- (6) ESOL courses;
- (7) Courses to teach basic principles of mathematics;
- (8) In Wales, courses for proficiency or literacy in Welsh;
- (9) Courses designed to teach independent living and communication skills to those having learning difficulties.

Vocational and qualifying courses were emphasised in the FHEA, from areas 1 to 4 above. As analysed previously, after 1985, vocational and qualifying courses became more popular. This trend has become more distinctive in recent years, particularly when the economic recession got worse. In this respect, the FHEA did reflect the differing needs and match the trend.

The FHEA stressed education for the disadvantaged. The funded Courses, from areas 5 to 9 above, can be encompassed in the field of adult basic education. In Section 4 of Chapter 1, the FHEA regulated the education of persons with learning difficulties. The definition of 'learning difficulty' is (DFE, 1992, p. 3):

- (1) A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of his age;
- (2) A disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided by institutions within the further education sector for persons of his age.

Accordingly, the funded courses of areas 5 to 9 were intended to achieve the objectives above to optimise conditions for the education of the disadvantaged. This ethic is similar to that of the Russell Report and satisfies the requirements for social equality. Briefly, the funded courses in the FHEA can be categorised into two groups: the vocational courses, qualifying courses and adult basic education.

***Some practices around and after 1993***

Powell (1993) carried out a survey of 30 LEAs and colleges in certain counties and metropolitan areas in England before mid-October 1992. Although the findings were patchy, there were distinct common tendencies of ACE in 1992-93. Several of the findings were as follow (Powell, 1993, p. 120):

- (1) Demand for Schedule 2-related courses remained strong, with ABE and GCSE especially popular;
- (2) Non-vocational course provision had declined, with certain idiosyncratic exceptions;
- (3) There was evidence to suggest that proactive marketing strategies resulted in increased enrolments;
- (4) There was a widespread rise in the number of people claiming fee concessions.

Powell's findings again revealed the impact of economic factors. The long period of recession had caused LEAs' enrolment to decrease. It also forced most institutions to cut budgets and to raise the fee levels to those above inflation. For example, the largest-scale fee set by Tameside College was 120 per cent. It resulted in more people claiming fee concessions and might have discouraged adult motivation and reduced enrolment. This then would become a negative recycling.

The NIACE/Gallup 1996 survey can provide more updated findings regarding ACE. This survey was conducted between 24 January and 6 February 1996 via interviews of 4,673 adults aged 17 and over in the UK. It found that (Tuckett and Sargant, 1996): (1) almost 1 in 4 was currently involved in learning; (2) between 1990 and 1996, current/recent participation in the North of England rose 12%, in the South East declined by 2%, in the South West declined by 6%, in the West Midlands declined by 11%, and in Wales was static; (3) vocational subjects dominated the main choices of areas to study (computer studies, 17%, business/administration/management, 12%, other professional qualifications, 11%); (4) the highest rate among reasons for learning, 48%, was work-related (36%); (5) 73% of 16-54 year old learners were seeking qualifications through study. Again, the NIACE/Gallup 1996 survey shows that vocational and qualifying courses are the first priority of most adult learners. This situation may be caused by adult concern over economic conditions and may have been encouraged by the government's ACE policy-making. For example, since the

shortage of funding, as compared with the 1990 survey (Sargant, 1991), the participation rates in most areas of England have waned according to the 1996 survey.

As for economic recession, this can affect the motives and types of adult learners. The long period of recession has resulted in high unemployment. In order to increase job opportunities, more adult learners have opted for vocational courses and qualifying courses. Non-vocational courses, therefore, have declined and become less available and proactive marketing strategies for vocational courses have attracted more enrolments. In addition, this tendency has changed the client types of groups, for instance, younger age-groups than before are to be found in the City Lit. All these trends mentioned above seem mainly influenced by economic recession. But this conclusion is too simplified. Yet it may be the prime factor in a group of many influential ones.

## **Summary**

This historical review of legislation related to ACE and linked to the practices of ACE, has disclosed that the focus of ACE in England and Wales has changed during the period covered from the 1919 Report to the 1992 FHEA. Traditionally, nonvocational adult education was the mainstream, especially from the 1950s to the 1960s. But since 1970, vocational adult education has gradually grown in importance. The shift, partly facilitated by the rising economic recession, gave traditional ACE a number of challenges. But ACE has also been influenced by many other factors. ACE itself has multiple dimensions. For example, adult learning was a protected educational opportunity; the government increased its control of provision via state aid; the working classes applied it as an instrument by which to enrich themselves; its budget was sensitive to economic conditions. These educational, political, social, and economic dimensions suggested that ACE might be affected by these some types of influential resources. To properly research national ACE policy-making, it is crucial to list these factors as specifically as possible. These changes found in the relevant Acts and Reports should reveal the government's shifts in ACE policy orientation. Thus, it is necessary to reveal the policy implications behind the legislation.

## **Chapter 3**

# **The Changing Face of ACE**

As the historical review of relevant Acts and Reports revealed, there have been shifts in ACE policy orientation in the British government's official legislation and documents. Those shifts have developed gradually and formed the changing face of ACE. This changing face has been formulated as a result of different influential factors inside and outside the DFE. At the moments of change in ACE in England and Wales, one needs to search out the influential resources which have underlie these shifts and to explore further the implications of ACE policy-making behind these shifts.

This chapter is intended to examine the changing face of ACE and find out the underlying influential resources and policy implications. It contains three sections:

- 3.1 The impact of the Conservative government;
- 3.2 Implications of ACE policy-making;
- 3.3 Potential influential factors.

### **3.1 The impact of the Conservative government**

The election of the Conservative government on 3 May 1979, which began a long term of leadership, has had important effects. It signalled a new wave of nationalism sweeping over Britain and heralded major changes in the economy, public policy, society and culture of the country (Juggernaut, 1995). The Conservative government's impact seems quite broad. According to Evans (1987), ACE had a major turning point in its history owing to the following:

- (1) The Conservative government's immediate impact was indirectly to deprive liberal adult education of funds;
- (2) Its longer term impact was to cause a reorganisation of priorities, particularly to shift the emphasis from traditional adult education towards a more specific conception of continuing education.

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Obviously in agreement with Evans, Jarvis (1993) argued that the policies of the UK government in the 1980s and early 1990s were designed to redirect education away from individual needs to the demands of the industrial and commercial sector of society. Stressing individual needs was the major characteristic of traditional adult education; however, the new term, continuing education, is more vocation-oriented. This fact reveals the shift in the roles of vocational and nonvocational adult education. There are two concrete examples. First, the PICKUP (Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating Programme) had been running since 1982. It offered support to colleges, polytechnics and universities in meeting the updating and retaining needs of employers and their workers, usually at 'full cost'. It would be completed in 1993-1994, leaving the further development of courses of continuing vocational education as the responsibility of the FEFCs. Second, the REPLAN, a product of the times, was established in 1984 as a 3 year DES initiative to give impetus to educational opportunities for unemployed adults and was extended for two years in February 1986.

Some policies are closely related to the Conservative Party's leadership. Such as the creation of large-scale unemployment by the Conservative government in its attempt to weaken the trade unions and to defeat the inflation which its financial policies had encouraged. The result was a need to create various forms of adult education for the unemployed, even if there simply were no jobs for them to go to after they had been trained (Elsdon, 1994). So training schemes were initiated to achieve the above aim. For example, the Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS), was delivered mainly by the further education colleges on behalf of an arm of the employment ministry. TOPS was replaced by Employment Training (ET) later. Another example is the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), which ran in parallel with TOPS and ET, and was supposed to provide every unemployed young person with sound training for work. These training schemes developed from the Conservative Party's leadership for political and economic reasons.

Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990 was a closely involved with the above change in policy orientation from liberal ACE to vocational ACE. In the field of education, her government addressed itself to the problems of falling rolls, school



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effectiveness, over-spending LEAs, accountability, parental power and the needs of industry (Juggernaut, 1995, p. 35). ACE was therefore expected to be much more practical. As noted, Mrs Thatcher had been in office for more than ten years and created so-called 'Thatcherism'. Lawton (1992) indicated that Thatcherism combined features of neo-liberal libertarianism as well as neo-conservative 'cultural rightism'. It had two major plans (the free economy and the strong state) together with a moral concern for the family. This ideology was used to defeat trade unions, encourage privatisation, reduce public expenditure, and abolish exchange controls (Gamble, 1988). Simon (1991) commented that 'Thatcherism', which appealed to self-interest, individualism and the virtues of enterprise, and sought to reverse the dominant ideas underlying the welfare state, began during this period to establish a certain hegemony, and this increasingly affected educational policy. But education - the social services generally - was not a priority for the Thatcher government, initially at least. According to Mrs Thatcher's ideas, welfare provision responsive to public choice, and based in part on individual responsibility, would recreate freedom and remoralise the British public. In Mrs Thatcher's own words (Thatcher, 1977, p. 97):

The sense of being self-reliant; of playing a role within the family, owning one's own property, of paying one's way, are all part of the spiritual ballast which maintains responsible citizenship, and provide a solid foundation from which people look around and see what more they might do for others and for themselves.

Policy prescriptions arising from such a critique were unsurprisingly clear. Policies and practices related to welfare, for example, were in need of restructuring and reorientation (Sullivan, 1992). As Whitty (1994) argued, for the neo-liberal politicians who dominated educational policy-making in Britain during much of the 1980s, however, social affairs were best organised according to the 'general principle of consumer sovereignty', which held that each individual is the best judge of his or her needs and wants, and of what is in their best interests. In terms of ACE, the principle of consumer sovereignty gives adults freedom of choice and makes the market respond to adults choice and develop diversity. However, the government's duty to provide ACE may be ignored. Since ACE was one sort of social policy, it could not avoid this current of change given these policies of Mrs Thatcher. Individual have been given more responsibilities, including that of continuing learning.

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As to the main consequences of Thatcherism for education, Dale (1989, p. 39) listed the following seven points:

- (1) Its further displacement from its previous uncritically accepted place of honour;
- (2) Increasingly lower levels of funding, especially in the noncompulsory sectors;
- (3) A gradual separation of responsibilities for education and training;
- (4) Further encouragement of private education;
- (5) Pressure to use the school as an agent of moral regeneration;
- (6) Continuing attacks on, sometimes even culminating in action against, radical teachers;
- (7) Further moves aimed at restratifying, especially secondary education.

Under these policies, the budgets for ACE, non-compulsory education, certainly decreased, above all the nonvocational provision. Evans (1987, p. 226) also said the Thatcher government's conception was that all continuing education should be self-financing. The decrease of public expenditure of the Thatcher government is attributed to its perception of a slow British economic recovery. Under Mrs Thatcher's leadership, Conservative economic policy-even in the early years-swung sharply to the right. The chief causes of Britain's economic problems had included, according to the group of politicians around Thatcher, public expenditure at too high a level and too loose a control by government of the amount of money allowed to circulate. It was therefore proposed that government spending on state interventionist projects should be slashed from the levels adopted by the previous Labour Government (Sullivan, 1992).

In this period, the Tory Government's policies related to these twin drives: towards a market economy on the one hand, and towards a more powerful centralised control on the other. The focus on the economy had produced 'economism' or 'vocationalism', which facilitated the government's push to stress the economic functions of ACE. Economism regards the priority of economic development as first and as a guideline. Vocationalism stresses the practical vocational function of education for the labour market. Since vocationalism mainly aims at economic development, economism and vocationalism are quite similar ideologies and can be used interchangeably (Tuijnman, 1992). Vocational ACE then received support to develop; respectively, traditional nonvocational ACE was more marginalised. A powerful

centralised control had grown since the 1970s. Simon (1991, p. 501) pointed out that the power-base of this centralising tendency clearly lay in the DES itself (as in the MSC) and to that extent was a bureaucratic response to social, economic and political pressures which transcended party, expressing deeper underlying concerns and solutions. As a result, LEAs' responsibilities and powers were decreased. For example, the MSC had become the preferred governmental organisation for dealing with youth unemployment. By 1983 the MSC offered some 350,000 one-year training placements to unemployed school leavers. Through the TVEI (Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative), a new arm of central government reached directly into the schools, funding and monitoring educational programmes for schools aged between 14 and 18. Additionally, The MSC's takeover of work-related Non Advanced Further Education (NAFE) in local authority colleges, again involving deductions from the grant settlement, was only another arm of this policy (Simon, 1991). Through the MSC, the policies of the Thatcher government have brought about a progressive increase in the amount of off the job training offered by private providers forcing colleges of further education, maintained by the LEAs, to compete in the market (Whitty and Menter, 1989). This is one of the results of the Thatcher's government's idea of privatisation in the educational market.

Another example is the establishment of City Technology Colleges (CTCs) in 1986. The Conservative government's intention of founding 'up to 20' CTCs by 1990 was announced by the then Secretary of State at the 1986 Conservative Party conference. This 'new choice of school' was to offer a free 'broadly-based secondary education with a strong technological element' to students aged 11-18, in schools made independent of LEAs by receiving their recurrent funding directly from the Department of Education and Science (DES). Business, industrial and charitable promoters would meet 'all or a substantial part' of their capital costs, and would be active partners in their development (DES, 1986). The establishment of CTCs by the Conservative government at least has two implications. First, the improvement of British economic competitiveness has been put onto school education as a crucial responsibility. Second, the CTCs would challenge the LEA's 'monopoly' of provision, most valuably where Labour-controlled authorities had pursued supposedly egalitarian policies

at the expense of educational achievement (Edwards, Gewirtz and Whitty, 1992). The power of the LEAs was therefore shared by more collaborative partners, especially employers, who could be influenced by the DES.

The long-term leadership of the Conservative Party, from 1979 to 1997 when the Labour Party won the general election, has gradually expanded its influence on ACE. As Elsdon (1994) commented, by ignoring the professional and politically moderate consensus about purpose and methods in education, and by destroying local democratic and national professional responsibility in and for education, the Thatcher and Major governments have created a situation which is totally new and, in British terms, quite literally alien. In effect, every ACE institution and the system as a whole with its teaching content and its organisation, has been delivered naked into the hands of central government.

### **3.2 Implications of ACE policy-making**

The legislative review of major Acts and Reports about ACE indeed has discovered certain policy implications. There were shifts in ACE in England and Wales during the period covered from the 1919 Report to the 1992 FHEA. These changes could show the orientations of ACE policy-making in England and Wales.

#### **The change in main providers**

In the light of vocational and nonvocational ACE, the main providers in England and Wales from the 1919 Report to the 1992 Act can be briefly classified as shown in Table 3.1.

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**Table 3.1** The main providers of ACE 1919-92.

1919 Report	1944 Act	1973 Report	1988 ERA	1992 FHEA
Vocational provision				
LEAs Polytechnics Voluntary & other	LEAs Polytechnics Voluntary & other	LEAs Polytechnics Voluntary & other	LEAs Polytechnics Voluntary & other	<b>FEFCs</b> <b>HEFCs</b> Voluntary & other
Nonvocational provision				
LEAs University Voluntary & other	LEAs University Voluntary & other	LEAs University Voluntary & other	LEAs University Voluntary & other	LEAs <b>HEFCs</b> Voluntary & other <b>FEFCs</b>

**Note. a:** Adult basic education

The main providers of ACE could be policy-makers as well. The greatest change in Table 3.1 is that from the 1992 Act, whereby LEAs have lost their power to offer vocational ACE to the FEFCs. The FEFCs also provide nonvocational education, ie, adult basic education as listed in Schedule 2. So, since the 1992 Act, the FEFCs and HEFCs have been empowered to become the major providers of ACE. In contrast, the LEAs' power to form ACE policy has been on the wane since the FHEA.

#### Policy implications

As to the policy implications of ACE from the 1919 Report to the FHEA, the researcher lists the following four points to discuss.

#### *The legislative status of ACE used to be under the umbrella of further education.*

All the discussed education Acts subsumed ACE under further education except those Reports specially promulgated for adult education such as the 1919 Report, the Ashby Report, and the Russell Report. Although there were some differences in definitions, the scope of further education in the 1944 Education Act, the 1988 ERA, and the 1992 FHEA always included ACE, or more specifically, post 16 education. This fact implies that ACE was not to be separated from further education in matters of legislation. The FHEA was the first Act passed particularly for further education and thereby differed from the 1944

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Education Act and the ERA, both of which included further education merely as one target of the whole Act. This first specific Act devoted primarily to further education may reflect that the importance of its legislative status had been promoted.

The Reports may have had noted impact on ACE even though they are not Acts. The 1919 Report, the Ashby Report, and the Russell Report were not acts of legislation but their recommendations could be taken into account in forming policy. Forming committees to do research and then to make suggestions was the main way to make policy for the British government.

#### ***FEFCs have substituted for LEAs to become the prime providers of Schedule 2 ACE.***

LEAs were the main providers of ACE in the past, as Table 3.1 shows, but the situation has changed. Table 3.2 lists the number of adult education centres(England and Wales) 1965/66-1990/91.

**Table 3.2** Numbers of adult education centres 1965/66-1990/91.

	1965/66	1970/71	1975/76	1980/81	1985/86	1989/90	1990/91
AEC	7,455	6,502	7,260	4,628	2,874 <sup>a</sup>	2,669	2,656

**Note. a:** Excludes youth clubs and centres; these are included in the years prior to 1985/86.

**Source.** Government Statistical Service, 1992, p. 26.

Table 3.2 shows that the numbers of adult education centres have decreased since 1975/76. Although after 1985/86 the numbers excluded youth clubs and centres, the trend is still very clear. Since the shortage of the budget which resulted from the LEAs' loss of powers and from economic recession, many adult education centres have begun to cut their staff or changed their employment hours from full-time to part-time. Some institutions have been on the verge of closure. This is the reason why one of the interviewees at stage 1 said that surviving has become their principal target.

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The change in enrolments in adult education centres also reflected the decline of the LEAs. Table 3.3 lists the enrolments in adult education centres in England 1970/71-1991/92.

**Table 3.3** Enrolments in adult education centres in England 1970/71-1991/92.

<i>Thousands</i>						
1970/71	1975/76	1982/83	1986/87	1988/89	1990/91	1991/92
Adult educational centre <sup>a</sup>						
Part-time day						
na <sup>b</sup>	na	365	451	463	480	470
Evening only						
na	na	1169	1004	929	872	822
All						
1320	1847	1534	1455	1392	1352	1292

**Note.** **a:** Includes youth clubs and centres before 1985.

**b:** not available

**Source.** DFE, 1993a, Table 1.

According to Table 3.3, in England, the enrolments in adult education centres have gradually decreased, especially after 1988/89. Further analysis shows the enrolments in part-time day courses to be stable. They seem to have grown. The enrolments in evening only courses have decayed rapidly since 1982/83.

LEAs were empowered with the major role and responsibility of providing local ACE before 1991. After the ERA, LEAs were deprived of key duties and changed their status step by step. In the 1992 FHEA, the new established FEFCs replaced the LEAs to provide Schedule 2 ACE. This trend implies that on the one hand, the role of the LEAs in ACE has declined and on the other hand, the system of ACE has been steadily integrated under the sponsorship of the FEFCs. The major effect of the FHEA was to weaken the powers of the LEAs, relieve them of control of the colleges, ie, the LMC, and to give these a specious independence which, in reality, placed them completely in the power of government-appointed funding bodies, and the central government itself (Elsdon, 1994). In terms of policy-making, the increase in powers of the central government represents a tendency toward power centralisation. The *local* diversity of ACE would decline and *national* policy-making could become more prominent.

***Vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education have gradually become the mainstream of ACE.***

Educational statistics disclose that the enrolments in vocational and qualifying courses have increased year by year since 1983. In 1990, the largest enrolment was in business and administration studies, which can be described as practical courses. In 1931-32, the largest one was in literature and language, which are typical liberal courses. In addition to that, the growth of enrolments in courses for qualifications also showed the vocational trend. One of the Conservative government's policies in the White Paper, 'Education and Training for the 21st Century' of May 1991 was to make good quality education available to adults to help them improve their qualifications and update their skills. The further expansion of vocational qualifications and the broader extension of competence education have been promoted by the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQs), the official endorsement from the DFE through the school curriculum, the introduction of courses offered by the Business and Technician Education Councils in 1991 and by the piloting of general National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 1992 (Parry, 1993). That the FHEA directly listed the vocational and qualifying courses has made this trend more salient.

Adult basic education has become more significant and this is what Kelly (1992) described as one of the 'new emphases'. In the Russell Report, education for the socially disadvantaged was stressed. The FHEA regulated a part of this field again. In Kelly's definition, the disadvantaged members include the handicapped, the elderly, the unemployed, and many others who for one reason or another have missed the chance to receive education in earlier life (Kelly, 1992, p. xvii). The definition of the disadvantaged in the Russell Report was wider for it included the physically and mentally handicapped as well as those who, on account of their limited educational background, present cultural or social environment, age, location, occupation or status, could not easily take part in adult education as normally provided (DES, 1973, p. 92). The FHEA employed the term, learning difficulties, to express its concern over the disadvantaged. Although the scope of learning difficulties was more narrow than the one defined by Kelly or the Russell Report, it still had a positive significance



in that adults with learning difficulties could receive more opportunities and resources to learn. In Schedule 2 of the FHEA, the courses for basic literacy knowledge of English and Welsh, and basic mathematics are the priorities. So, those relevant institutions like the Basic Skill Agency, the previous ALBSU, would grow in importance.

### **The factors affecting the orientation of ACE policy-making**

Certain factors have resulted in the above changes in ACE. However, in terms of national policy-making, what resulted in the changes in policy orientation is complex. These changes can not be attributed to a sole factor; on the contrast, there may be a number of influential factors. Take the Adult School Movement for example. Hall (1985, p. 78) indicated that a matter upon which the position of the Adult School Movement has always seemed somewhat ambivalent has been that of its attitude to social, political and economic problems. On the one hand, schools were encouraged to study such problems, but on the other hand, they have been discouraged from taking any active part in seeking to alleviate them by means of political protest. Hall (1985) has shown the importance of political, economic, and social factors and explained why the Adult School Movement was influenced by these factors. When discussing the changes in the market environment, Crisp (1991) listed four groups of factor: political, social and demographic, economic, technological and other factors which could affect ACE. Duke (1994) pointed out four groups of factors contributing to the need for ACE: (1) obsolescence of knowledge and skills; (2) demography; (3) economic, employment and equality considerations; (4) political and civic considerations. When reviewing the European trends in adult education, Tuijnman (1996) raised demographic, economic, political, social and cultural factors to explain recent changes. Accordingly, most of the above argued factors relating to ACE's development cover political, economic, social and individual (demography) dimensions. Referring to the previous legislative review, we can see factors affecting ACE policy-making in England and Wales also mainly stem from political, economic, social and individual dimensions. Additionally, since ACE is a subfield of education, there may be educational factors, such as the idea of distance learning that may affect ACE policy-making. Therefore, referring to the literature review and ACE practice, the researcher will raise political, economic, social , educational, and adult learner factors

as five hypothetical factors that may have influenced ACE policy-making in England and Wales for further analysis.

### **3.3 Potential influential factors**

#### **Political factors**

Great Britain is a country which has adopted a political party system. Different parties have different ideologies. The two major parties are the Conservative and the Labour Parties. Basically Conservative Party rhetoric refers to 'personal responsibility', 'freedom', 'incentive', and 'enterprise'; conversely the Labour Party rhetoric refers to 'equality', 'redistribution' and 'social justice' (Kavanagh, 1990). Whether these different ideologies were reflected in education policy is another question. Lawton (1992) reviewed the relations between education, ideology, and different governments and then pointed out that the Labour Party had usually merely taken the existing education system and suggested minor adjustments to it in order to try to make sure that the interests of working class children were considered more fairly. The Labour Party still lacked an overall policy on education. They have continued to be satisfied with criticising Conservative proposals rather than developing their own alternatives. As to the Conservative Party, Lawton said the official Conservative policy on education remained 'moderate'-trying to preserve the best whilst encouraging useful reforms, including many comprehensive schemes (Lawton, 1992, p. 36). Although one can argue that in the period between 1950 and 1974, the Conservative Party failed to fashion an educational policy in line with Conservative philosophy (Knight, 1990), that the 'new vocationalism' developed from Keith Joseph and Thatcherism and heralded a significant shift in Conservative education policy has been discussed. Parry (1993) noted that the policy emphasis styled the 'new vocationalism' has been developed and delivered by two separate government departments: the Department of Employment, with overall responsibility for academic and general education in schools, further education and higher education.

In terms of ACE, both the Conservative's new vocationalism and Thatcherism and Labour's social justice may have generated vital influences. The new vocationalism has fostered the growth of vocational ACE and the decrease of nonvocational provision. Thatcherism, which

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stressed self-financing and cutting public expenditures caused the budget shortage of traditional adult education provision. The emphasis on education for the disadvantaged in the Russell Report and in the FHEA presented a sense of equality and social justice which smacks of the Labour Party's ideology. Is there any difference in education expenditure between the different parties while they were in power? Table 3.4 reveals the total Net UK education and related expenditure for 1965-1991.

**Table 3.4** Total Net UK education and related expenditure.

Financial year						
1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1989	1990 <sup>a</sup>
-66	-71	-76	-81	-86	-90	-91
Party in power						
L <sup>b</sup>	C <sup>c</sup>	L	C	C	C	C
Net expenditure <sup>d</sup>						
Cash (million)						
1,644	2,740	7,009	12,941	17,288	24,614	26,678
% of GDP <sup>e</sup>						
4.6	5.2	6.4	5.5	4.8	4.8	4.8

**Note.** a: Provisional.

b: Labour Party c: Conservative Party

d: Excludes additional adjustment to allow for capital consumption made for National Accounts purposes amounting to 1.144m in 1990-91.

e: GDP at market price. Includes adjustments to remove the distinction caused by the abolition of domestic rates which have led to revisions to the historical series.

**Source.** Revised Government Statistical Service, 1992, p. 11.

According to Table 3.4, the highest percentage of education expenditure of GDP was 6.4% in 1975-76, when the Labour Party was in power. That percentage faded after 1980, when Mrs Thatcher acquired leadership. Yet more evidence is needed to compare the difference in education expenditure between the Conservative and Labour Parties. However, Table 3.4 provides some interesting messages. Has the Labour Party paid more attention to ACE as according to the common stereotype? Evans gave us a negative answer. Evans (1987, p. 87) indicated that the idea that adult education has been most favoured by Labour Party policy makers must be mitigated by two factors:

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(1) Limited attention was paid to adult education in all manifestos and even Labour has been primarily concerned with comprehensivisation and nursery education;

(2) Whichever government was in power before 1979, educational policy-making was incrementalist in character.

Evans's points above provided one perspective. In his opinion, no matter which political party was in power, ACE did not get much attention. Incrementalism in educational policy-making implies that since policy was formulated through gradual accretion, the direct influence of the political parties may not have been obvious. However, the political context associated with an unbroken period of self-styled 'radical' Conservative administration since 1979, has been a search for market solutions, a determination to curb levels of public expenditure, and a shift in powers and responsibilities, away from local government and educational 'producers', and towards private employers and individual 'clients' and 'consumers' (Parry, 1993). As reviewed previously, the long-term leadership of the Conservative Party and its dominating ideology, Thatcherism, have redistributed public expenditure based on market competition; have invited more employers to become involved in the educational enterprise; have centralised the power of the educational administration; have highlighted self-financing. As Juggernaut (1995) commented, during the phase of Thatcherism, industrial trainers and privatisers were unquestionably the dominant client groups influencing educational and economic policies so as to answer to the needs and interests of the capitalist industrial sectors. Their impact on ACE has become a complex influential resource potentially combining political, economic, social, educational and other factors.

In addition to the ideologies of the political parties, other political factors may affect ACE policy. For example, the First World War facilitated different pressure groups in their bid for adult education and it also affected the development of the economy, making the 1919 Report idealistic. During the Second World War, Korean War, and Cold War, the British government had to share more political responsibilities and obligations by spending more on defense expenditures. As a result, public expenditures including educational budgets were affected. Political disputes resulting from the argument on the function of adult education

also arose between the different parties and in public. As Styler (1982, p. 171) observed, historically a feature of adult education in Britain has been a political dispute between those who have wanted it to be an instrument for working class emancipation and those who has believed education was good in itself. Simon (1965) also pointed out that the working class struggled for educational rights via diverse political activities. ACE for the working class, in some sense, had a political character.

### **Economic factors**

The relationship between the economy and education is very close. In Britain, the expansion of educational opportunities is also expected to fulfill economic functions. For example, the 1963 Robbins Report, which enlarged the entrance of higher education, saw the need to increase educational opportunities as well as economic expectation. During the 1960s, educational provision was to be widened, not only for social and educational reasons but also because wider educational opportunities were seen as imperative if the UK was to develop the sort of skilled workforce that would help to revive economic competitiveness, and with it economic growth (Sullivan, 1992). Thus, education is not only an investment in individual human beings but also in the future, particularly in British economic development. The NIACE (1990) noted that during the 1970s and early 1980s, there were considerable fluctuations in the state of the UK economy and it is now accepted that education and training are crucial factors in maximising the success of economic achievement. However, long-term economic recession had an impact on the provision of ACE. Data from 13 countries suggested that the second-class status of adult education was reinforced by the recession (Carr-Hill, 1990, p. 226). The recession has made the fate of 'Cinderella' into as a Chinese saying goes, one of 'snow + frost', ie, progressively worse.

Long-term recession has led to a host of influences on traditional ACE. Elsey (1986) noted that Britain has been in economic decline for a long time, principally as a consequence of being the first nation to industrialise and the most resistant to subsequent updating and innovation in productive methods and capacity. Tuckett (1993) also explained that there was a major decline in manufacturing jobs in Britain over the previous ten years: an increase in

part-time, low-paid jobs, often employing women, in service sectors; higher segmentation of the labour market; short job-life; and the relative decline of cities. In addition to the British factors, there were others stemming from the global recession in the 1930s and the 1970s. In order to effectively recover from the recession, education has been applied as a crucial instrument to instigate economic regeneration. For instance, since the mid-1970s, vocationalism has been emphasised in education. The establishment of the MSC was a case in point. So, by the mid-1980s, education policy had become much more intertwined with training policy and, to a lesser extent, with industrial policy. Such variations may occur within a pattern of continuing or recurring features (Hogwood, 1991). A great deal of evidence has shown that key features are continuing and recurring.

As Ball commented, vocationalism has affected the policy-making of education. One of the effects is that control and policy-making in education are now more overtly and directly influenced by the business community. It is now normal for the government to nominate representatives of industry to key committees, and to decision-making and allocatory bodies concerned with education (Ball, 1990, pp. 96-97). Green (1990) pointed out that for a decade and more, Conservative governments have sought to reverse the social-democratic policies of the post-war welfare state and construct a new social order based on the free market principles of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Education has been one of the principal targets for radical reconstruction and the passing of the 1988 ERA represents a first stage in the construction of a market education system. The relationship between the educational system and the market has been reinforced. In addition to vocationalism, Tuijnman (1992) applied the features of economism to explain the market model in adult education policy. The idea of economism is that education is a profitable investment. The implications of 'economism' are (Tuijnman, 1992, p. 210):

- (1) The interests of firms in training tend to take precedence over public interests in skill development.
- (2) Economic objectives such as achieving competitiveness and profitability are given much more weight than social goals aimed at, for instance, equality and the maintenance of the 'welfare society'.

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The first point above is supported by Ball's view that more representatives of industry have become involved in key education committees, decision-making, and allocatory bodies (Ball, 1990). Proof of the second point can be seen in the establishment of the National Education and Training Targets (NETTs). There are two sets of targets for the NETTs: foundation learning and lifetime learning. Taking the targets for lifetime learning for example, by 1996, all employees should take part in training or development, with 50% aiming for NVQs or units towards them; by the year 2000, 60% of the workforce should be qualified to at least NVQs level 3 (or equivalent) ; and finally by 1996, 50% of medium to larger organisations are to be 'Investors in People'. Clearly, the targets are focused on the skill training to advance the economic competitiveness of this country by way of lifelong learning. This is the second point Tuijnman (1992) listed that achieving competitiveness and profitability are weighted heavily.

The change in budgeting for ACE should make the status of 'Cinderella' more clear. Nearly all of the interviewees at stage 1 expressed the feeling that how to get more funding has been their most striven-after aim. Had the DFE spent much money on ACE? Table 3.5 lists the central government expenditure on adult education with respect to local authorities within the DFE programmes from 1982.

**Table 3.5** Central government expenditure on adult education and grants to local authorities 1982-1996.

<i>Voted in estimates</i>							<i>million</i>
1982	1985	1988	1989	1992	1993	1994	1995
-83	-86	-89	-90	-93	-94	-95	-96
<i>outturn</i>				<i>estimated plan</i>			
FE for adults & others <sup>a</sup>							
11	15	17	11	19	5	5	5
of the total expenditure							
.0069	.0084	.0076	.0032	.0050	.00079	.00073	.00069

**Note. a:** Excludes the Further Education Funding Councils

**Source.** DFE, 1993b, Table 2; DFE, 1993c, p. 2.

Table 3.5 focuses on the previous Conservative government's expenditure on further education for adults and other further education, and excludes the FEFCs, which have received more funding since 1992-93. It shows that expenditure was quite low, especially

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after 1993-94, when most of the funds would be given to the FEFCs and expenditure would decrease precipitously. The chief victim would be the nonvocational ACE provision that was left to the LEAs.

Table 3.6 provides an overview of local authority current expenditure on adult education centres in England from 1979 to 1993.

**Table 3.6** Local authority current expenditure on adult education centres in England.

current spending		million at cash price				
1979	1982	1985	1988	1990	1991	1992
-80	-83	-86	-89	-91	-92	-93
outturn						
Adult Education Centre <sup>a</sup>						
56	77	102	117	140	153	164
% of the total current spending						
.0078	.0075	.0088	.0077	.0081	.0077	.0077

**Note. a:** Excludes provision for adults in Further Education College.

**Source.** DFE, 1993b, Table 2.

According to Table 3.6, in terms of the percentage of the total current spending, local authority current spending on adult education centres in England did not increase. Although the expenditure grew year by year, the percentage of total current education spending was very steady. The average percentage from 1979 to 1993 was .0079%. The shortage of the budget reflected that, during the time of recession, the resources available for ACE were limited.

Economic recession and the Conservative government's vocationalism and economism have fostered the growth of vocational and qualifying provision which would directly contribute to the economic recovery. ACE has been used as an instrument for economic development. Traditional liberal ACE because of its lack of economic function has been marginalised under the push of public scepticism about the rationale for providing education for 'leisure purposes' at public expense (National Commission on Education, 1993). The closer link between ACE and the market has given employers the opportunity to become involved in



the DFE's policy-making. Their potential influence is increasing. Given the shortage of funding due to economic recession and the power passed to the FEFCs, LEAs have lost the resources necessary to serve ACE. A Chinese proverb contends: 'Even the most skilful housewife cannot prepare a meal without rice'. This implies that nobody can accomplish anything without the necessary resources. The LEAs' main duty have been changed into offering the provision not included in the Schedule 2 which means mostly traditional liberal ACE that has become much more marginalised. The LEAs' role in ACE therefore has been declining.

### **Social factors**

As the historical legislative review has shown, ACE's development bears a close relationship with the changes in society in England and Wales. ACE was applied to respond to the needs of society and to contribute to its development. Thus, adult education is described as a classic example of social policy in Britain (Griffin, 1987). Social policy is typically defined as public policy, of which a major social component, however, is dedicated to improving specific aspects of social conditions. Education, health, and social welfare are three widely recognised areas of social policy implementation (Quigley, 1993, p. 119). With regard to education, social policy has been defined as 'the attempt to use education to solve social problems, influence social structures to improve one or more aspects of the social conditions, to anticipate crisis (Silver, 1980, p. 17). ACE has been provided as a learning opportunity to all people, especially for the disadvantaged. Not only can it help solve social problems, such as inequality, but give the lower classes the opportunity for upward social mobility. In essence, ACE is clearly a part of social policy.

There are several models of social policy. Some models may be transferred to the ideologies of ACE policy-makers and become an influential underlying resource. Quigley (1993) listed a figure similar to Figure 3.1 to discuss the relationship between models of social policy, adult education practices, and sociology theories.

---

<b>Social policy</b>		
	Progressive-liberal	Social redistribution
Market model.....	-welfare model.....	-model
<b>Adult education</b>		
Vocational-behaviourist.....	Liberal-humanistic	Liberatory/social
	-progressive.....	reconstruction
<b>Sociology theory</b>		
Structural-functionalism<.....	>Conflict theory	

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**Figure 3.1** Models of social policy, adult education practices and sociology theories.

**Source.** Quigley, 1993, p. 120.

In figure 3.1, there are three sorts of social policy models classified by the differences in their ideas, which are related to three adult education orientations and to two main sociology theories. In terms of adult education, the vocational-behaviourist orientation corresponds to the market model and to structural functionalism; the liberal-humanistic-progressive corresponds to the progressive-liberal-welfare model and to the social theory between structural functionalism and conflict theory; liberal/social reconstruction corresponding to the social redistribution model and to conflict theory. Accordingly, different adult education orientations are based upon a different social policy model and a sociology theory. Jarvis (1993) suggested four social policy models: the market model, progressive liberalism model, welfare model, and social control model. Compared with Figure 3.1, except for the social control model, Jarvis's models are similar to those of Quigley. The social control model argues that any state provision of education is one in which education is being used as a mechanism by the state. Elsey (1986) argued three social policy models: the conventional, liberal-progressive, and radical model. The conventional model, including the above market model, stresses social conservative/maintenance, individualism and economic development. The liberal-progressive model is like the one in Figure 3.1, focusing on social reform and individual development. The radical model, similar to the social redistribution model, focuses on far reaching social change and college egalitarianism.

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It is not difficult to analyse the shift in British ACE according to the social policy models above. Traditionally, especially before the 1970s, ACE in this country could be classified into the liberal-humanistic-progressive orientation on the basis of the progressive-liberal-welfare model. Elsey (1986) also mentioned that in a contemporary context adult education has been linked with the developments of the welfare state as part of a major piece of legislation through the 1944 Act. At this time nonvocational education was the mainstream of ACE. Both the 1919 Report and the 1973 Russell Report reflected this trend. The Russell Report, which emphasised education for the disadvantaged, and the FHEA which stressed education for people with learning difficulties and adult basic education, both reflected the spirit of the welfare model. After the 1970s, the vocational-behaviourist, ie, the market model gradually acquired dominance since it was supported by the long-term economic recession. As of this moment, the market model has radically affected the development of ACE, facilitated the vocational education, and resulted in the reduction of nonvocational education. As Jarvis commented, the policies of the UK government in the 1980s and early 1990s were designed to redirect education away from individual needs, and to meet the demands of the industrial and commercial sector of society (Jarvis, 1993, p. 108). As to the liberal/social reconstruction orientation, ie, the social redistribution model or, say, the radical model, this was subsumed under the traditional ACE ideology of this country. However as the liberal-humanistic-progressive orientation has declined since the 1970s, the radical model has extended its argument rapidly. At present, the radical model has become the guardian of nonvocational ACE and become a powerful rival of the market model.

Social change, which includes a series of shifts in society and reveals the tendencies of social development, is another significant comprehensive factor affecting the development of ACE. The Alexander Report indicated that the following sorts of changes in society might support the development of adult education (Scottish Education Department, 1975, pp. 21-23):

- (1) Demographic factors: age distribution, geographical location, social mobility of the population;
- (2) Being hard to comprehend certain features of modern life;
- (3) Concerning about particular aspects of our society;
- (4) Participation in the making of decisions reflects the individual feeling of powerlessness in a society;

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(5) Changes in the patterns of employment resulting from technological changes bring about important changes in social structure, blurring or eliminating long-established distinctions of status and introducing new hierarchies within occupations, industry and society;

(6) Education changes itself and the need for individuals to adjust to change;

(7) The growth of leisure opens out exciting possibilities for expanding both the quality and quantity of adult education.

Social change is a broad and comprehensive concept and its relationship with ACE is interactive. The above aspects of the demography of the whole population, including social mobility, along with social life, technology, social structure, and life style were raised as indicators of social change. Social change encompasses a variety of shifts in social activity and trends. In terms of ACE's development, the growth of the elderly population (demography), the struggles of the working class (social mobility and social structure), the increase in leisure activities (social life and life style), the redistribution of the workforce (social structure), and the expansion of distance learning (technology) are all signals of social change. Social change may facilitate the development of ACE through creating the adult need to continue, while ACE may effect the change of society via the outcome of adult learning. For instance, regarding point 5 above, a change in social structure is an influence that may cause ACE to grow. However, after completing studies that can increase the income, adult learners may upgrade their social status and obtain upward social mobility. And, when participation in ACE has become a daily leisure time activity, people's life style may shift. From 1900 to 1998, a long period of nearly one century, changes in society and ACE have interacted along various dimensions.

#### **Educational factors**

The change in educational ideas has pushed the growth of ACE. The ACACE (1979, p. 5) explained that most people in this country traditionally thought of education as something that was experienced only by children and young people as a preparation for adult life. However, there has been a growing awareness that education should be a continuing experience spread over the whole of one's life. This idea is supported by much psychological research on adult learning, which has provided evidence that adults over school age are able

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to learn as well as school students. The Alexander Report also pointed out that education now had a much broader connotation than formerly, namely, as something not only concerned with the training of the intellect (Scottish Education Department, 1975). Education has become a basic right of everyone, advocated by UNESCO in 1985 as 'the Rights to learn'. This trend in the perception of the value of education has made the British government and voluntary groups strive to offer learning opportunities for people over 16. Education means not only school education but can be carried out anywhere at any time on any age-groups. This is the reason why the 1919 Report and the Ashby Report stressed the importance of adult education and recommended that the government invest more resources to develop it.

As for educational practice, ACE has been served by both the statutory and voluntary sectors. In terms of the development of ACE, voluntary sectors such as the WEA and Women's Institute have played a significant part. Interaction between the government and professional organisations also highlights the necessity of cooperation, eg, Boswell (1993) and NIACE (1994a). From the 1919 Report to the 1992 FHEA, cooperation between the statutory and voluntary sectors was emphasised too. The method of serving ACE and the different roles of ACE sectors, which are regulated by legislation and reflected in practice, have influenced ACE policy-making and can be defined as educational factors.

The idea of achieving educational equality also has fostered the growth of ACE in Britain. Educational equality is an idea of social justice as well as an educational philosophy. In service to equal rights, education opportunities should be opened to every person no matter whether he/she is of the working class or middle class. In British tradition, adult education, achieving educational equality occupied a vital position. That the working class struggled to set up their own ACE institutions and extended educational opportunities reveals a significant history. The WEA is an example. The Russell Report highlighted education for the disadvantaged and the FHEA for people with learning difficulties, both aiming at ensuring educational equality. In essence, ACE has compensatory and remedial functions,

particularly for those who missed out or failed in their initial education. The listing of adult basic education in Schedule 2 and the establishment of the ALBSU are both good examples.

### **Learner factors**

Learner factors are defined as reasons deriving from different adult demographic and psychological variables. Adults are the target group of ACE provision. Their demographic and psychologic characteristics are significant for ACE policy-makers to keep in mind as they form policy to meet adult demands. Adult demands are also usually expressed by pressure groups who wish to impact the DFE's ACE policy-making. In research upon ACE, adult characteristics such as gender, age, place of residence, occupation, social class and motives are usually important variables for discussion, for instance in Tuckett and Sargent (1996). These adult psychological characteristics may be affected by other factors. For example, the development of the economy influences individuals quite directly. As reviewed above, when recession caused unemployment, more adult learners aimed at vocational and qualifying courses to enrich their knowledge. Recession also resulted in the government cutting budgets and raising fees, and for those who became unemployed, their participation motives were damaged. Thus, adults' participation has become an important variable in ACE research (Boshier, 1991). The possible relationship between adult participation in ACE and other influential factors has to be explored. It would be also interesting to analyse the potential influence of adult participation on the DFE's ACE policy-making.

Learner factors may be also influenced by social and educational ones. The right to take part in continuing education can be well protected when the social function of adult education is highlighted. When social equality and justice are emphasised, the disadvantaged will have more opportunities to participate in learning and discrimination against gender, the ethnic minorities, the aged, and the disabled will decrease. As Sargent found, the major factor affecting participation continues to be social class. The upper and middle classes stay in school longer, go on to post-school education at a higher rate, and are then much more likely to return to continue their education as adults than the working class (Sargent, 1991, p. 12). This finding has two implications. First, the working class needs to be more concerned about

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increasing their participation to improve social equality. Second, personal involvement is affected by economic factors. Social class is not only a social factor in terms of a whole society but has a close relation with economic factors in the view of the individual because personal income is a marked indicator of social class. In other respects, if the individual has the idea that education is not restricted to the inside of schools but is a lifelong activity, then he/she will be more apt to participate in ACE. If there are many providers who together offer sufficient provision of ACE, adult motivation will be readily stimulated. This is the main reason why the 1992 FHEA highlighted the idea of 'adequacy'. Plentiful learning opportunity is an essential condition for improving ACE. The interaction between learners' and other factors shows an interesting and significant research problem in how to clarify and compare their different possible influence.

Adult learners' needs are also a significant factor that may affect ACE policy-making. As Keddie argued, liberal adult education was based upon an individualist ideology (Keddie, 1980). Individual interests and needs are basic reasons motivating adults to continue their learning. Tuijnman (1992) even emphasised that 'the notion of "social demand" seems to have been replaced with "individual demand" as a determinant of provision; the problem of access is being considered in relation to the needs of the individual adult learner'. Jarvis (1993) also concluded that individual interest has been shown to underlie the idea of liberal adult education since it was based upon the assumption that adults were free and would act rationally in their own interest. This is the reason Corner listed the needs of adult learners as an important factor affecting the development of adult and community education (Corner, 1990). As the legislative review has indicated, both the 1919 Report and the 1973 Russell Report highlighted the individual adult needs pertaining to ACE. However, especially under the influence of political and economic factors, the above advocate in the Reports became a bit over idealistic. The influence of adult needs on the DFE's ACE policy-making has to be assessed.

## **Summary**

ACE has become more vocation- and qualification-orientated in England and Wales since the 1970s. Vocationalism and economism, both mainly stressed by the Conservative government, and economic recession have mostly resulted in the practical orientation of ACE. Traditional liberal ACE has been marginalised and has struggled to survive. At this moment, the market model and radical model of social policy are being debated and affect ACE policy-makers. However, mainly due to the influences of political and economic factors, it seems that the market model has become comparatively influential. Behind the changing ACE, there have been influential resources which fostered these changes. Referring to the literature review and the practice of ACE, the researcher has summarised five groups of factors, ie, political, economic, social, educational and learners' factors as the hypothesised factors affecting the shifts in ACE policy-making in England and Wales. This classification now has to be further confirmed and analysed according to different collected data.



## **Chapter 4**

### **SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF POLICY-MAKING**

As discussed previously, factors possibly affecting national ACE policy-making in England and Wales cover a variety of dimensions. In order to define these factors clearly, a suitable approach which is able to consider these different dimensions fully is required. Namely, a 'systematic analysis' is needed to search out these factors. In terms of policy-making, varied approaches have been applied by researchers. Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. Since there is no perfect approach, the best approach is the one which is able to achieve the research purposes successfully.

Systems analysis is an approach developed from systems theory, which emphasises the importance of discussing related influential factors in a system operation. Since policy-making is a complicated topic covering various dimensions it will be helpful to discuss policy-making via systems analysis. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the concept of policy analysis and different approaches to the study of policy-making, then looks at systems theory as a theoretical framework for exploring the demands and factors affecting national ACE policy-making and the DFE's current ACE policies in England and Wales.

This chapter includes the following five sections:

- 4.1 Basic concepts of policy analysis;
- 4.2 Different approaches to the study of policy-making;
- 4.3 Application of systems theory to policy-making;
- 4.4 Evaluation of systems theory;
- 4.5 Analysing policy-making through systems theory.

## **4.1 Basic concepts of policy analysis**

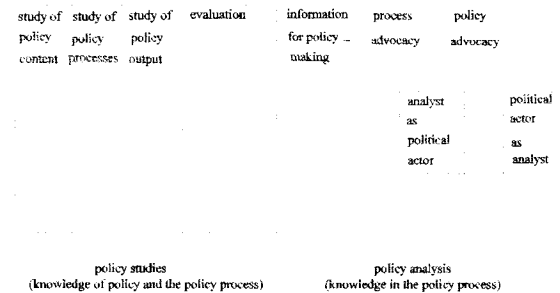
In the language of systems theory, policy-making includes three continuous stages: input, throughput, and output. Policy analysis is one aspect of the study of policy-making. Understanding policy analysis is the starting point of research on policy-making.

### **Classification of policy analysis**

Policy analysis can be a prescriptive as well as a descriptive activity. It is usually divided into several different types by researchers (Ham and Hill, 1993, pp. 9-10; Hogwood and Gunn, 1984):

- (1) Studies of policy content in which analysts seek to describe and explain the genesis and development of particular policies;
- (2) Studies of policy process in which attention is focused on the stages through which issues pass and attempts are made to assess the influence of different factors on the development of the issues;
- (3) Studies of policy outputs which seek to explain why levels of expenditure of service provision vary between areas, in other terms, policy determination;
- (4) Evaluation studies, sometimes referred to as impact studies, which analyse the impact policies have on the population;
- (5) Information for policy-making in which data are marshalled in order to assist policy-makers reach decisions;
- (6) Process advocacy, a variant of analysis for policy in which analysts seek to improve the nature of policy-making systems;
- (7) Policy advocacy, an activity which involves the analyst in pressing specific options and ideas in the policy process, either individually or in association with others, perhaps through a pressure group.

Ham and Hill (1993) and Hogwood and Gunn (1984) further classified, (1) the above studies of policy content, studies of policy process, and studies of policy output as analysis of policy or in Hogwood's and Gunn's (1984) terms, knowledge of policy and the policy process. (2) information for policy-making, process advocacy, and policy advocacy as analysis for policy or in Hogwood's and Gunn's words (1984), knowledge in the policy process. Finally, (3) evaluation studies mark the borderline between analysis of policy and analysis for policy. The three types of analysis of policy-making can be illustrated in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1** Types of analyses of policy-making.  
**Source.** Revised Hogwood and Gunn, 1984, p. 29.

As Figure 4.1 suggests, the types of analyses of policy-making, say, policy studies and policy analysis, contain seven different foci on studying policy-making. Policy studies can be seen as exploring knowledge *of* policy and the policy process. Comparatively, policy analysis can be seen as exploring knowledge *in* the policy process. This division is based on the difference of research focus. The foci of policy studies are on specific policy, whether with respect to its content, process, or output. Policy analysis aims to help in the formulation of policy via the discussion of information, process and policy advocacy. Evaluation studies are mainly intended to realise the impact of policy.

This dual-type policy analysis, say, the analysis of policy and analysis for policy, is a common classification. Gordon, Lewis and Young (1977) presented five categories of policy analysis: policy advocacy, information for policy, policy monitoring and evaluation, analysis of policy determination, and analysis of policy content. The former two can be seen as analysis for policy and the latter two as analysis of policy. Policy monitoring and evaluation lie between the analysis for policy and the analysis of policy. Clearly, the typology of policy analysis presented by Gordon et al (1977) is quite similar to that of Ham and Hill (1993). In addition, Codd emphasises that policy analysis is a form of enquiry which provides either the informational base upon which the policy is constructed or a critical examination of existing policies (Codd, 1988, p. 235). He regarded the former as analysis for policy, of

which there are two forms: policy advocacy and information for policy. He classified the latter as analysis of policy, of which there are again two forms: analysis of policy determination and effects, and analysis of policy content. Codd's classification was not so different from the typology of policy analysis argued by Ham, Hill (1993) and Gorden et al (1977).

Policy analysis can also be further divided into different types, based on various dimensions. According to Cibulka (1994) listing, policy analysis can be divided into two types: basic (academic) policy analysis and applied policy analysis.

**Table 4.1** Types of policy analysis

Dimension	Basic (academic) policy analysis	Applied policy analysis
Aspects of policy which address		
Interest	Determinants, adoption, implementation, content, and impact	Content and impact
Aim	Understanding, explanation, and prediction	Evaluation, change, justification, and prediction
Action	Researchers in universities or think-tanks	Consulting firms, interest groups, and government analysts

**Source.** Cibulka, 1994, p. 107.

In Table 4.1, basic (academic) policy analysis, or so-called policy research, can focus on a wide variety of phenomena related to the antecedents and causes of policy, how it is adopted and implemented, its content, and consequences. The aim of such endeavours is to understand and explain, and occasionally to predict. By contrast, applied policy analysis concentrates on solving particular policy problems for policy makers or stake holders in the policy process (Cibulka, 1994). As for this research, its main interests were in studying the determinants, adoption and contents of ACE policy; its aims were the understanding and explanation of ACE policy. Therefore, this research is an example of basic (academic) policy analysis.

Accordingly, policy analysis in this research can be regarded as the analysis for policy; or in Hogwood's and Gunn's (1984) terms, this research was intended to explore knowledge in the policy process. It aims to probe information by which policy is constructed rather than merely to examine the existing specific policy. The researcher would like to make recommendations to policy-makers on the basis of his findings. Policy analysis in this research would cover the above mentioned policy advocacy and information for policy. It is also similar to analysis of policy determination, ie, examining the input and the process by which work forwards the construction of public policy. Comparatively, this is one of the types of policy analysis Dye advocated: a primary concern with explanation rather than prescription (Dye, 1984).

### **The controversial meaning of policy analysis**

Analysing the process and the outcome of policy-making is one sort of policy analysis; however, the definition of policy analysis is still a matter for argument. As Sharkansky commented, it would be futile and misleading to try to work toward a clear definition of policy, policy process, or policy-making. Political scientists who study these topics take different approaches and use specific definitions that are appropriate for their own purposes. These overlapping definitions, however, do share certain meanings (Sharkansky, 1970, p. 1). In fact, this diversity of meanings is one of the characteristics of policy analysis. Nonetheless, when studying policy-making, researchers are better off avoiding the over-discussing the meaning of policy analysis.

The difficulty of defining policy analysis partly results from the characteristics of policy problems. Policy problems can have the following chief characteristics (Mann, 1975, pp. 10-17):

- (1) Public character: Policy problems are perceived as needs that are now, or are about to be, appropriate for governmental action;
- (2) Consequentiality: Policy problems are measured either in terms of impact on individuals or in terms of the level of need, or in terms of both combined;

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(3) Complexity: Policy problems are imbedded in a network of economic, political, psychological, social psychological, and moral components;

(4) Uncertainty: In education, uncertainty about policy problems is often so extreme that we can neither state nor describe them with much precision;

(5) Differing interests: Different interests are a direct reflection of a heterogeneous society.

The above characteristics of policy problems mark the various emphases on policy analysis. Accordingly, public character, consequentiality, and differing interests remind us that policies usually have a close relationship with the public. When policy-makers formulate policies, they need to consider these characteristics and arouse public interest in the process of policy-making. Complexity and uncertainty imply that policy analysts require systematic methods to realise the various influential factors, in each specific context, that will help policy-making become more effective.

In essence, policy analysis is a sub-field of policy-making. It specifically focuses on the analysis of policy-making. Krone defined policy analysis as a component of the policy sciences involving research into public or private policy-making. The goal of policy analysis is the application of methods, models, and problem-solving techniques to the identification or invention of policy alternatives that will achieve the desired standards of quality (Krone, 1980, p. xxv). In reference to Krone's viewpoint, we can define policy analysis as research upon policy-making with the goal of improving the quality of policy-making. In order to achieve this goal, policy analysts need to apply methods, models, and problem solving techniques. These methods, models and problem-solving techniques should be scientific in character. This is one of the reasons why policy analysis is a component of the policy 'sciences', as Krone (1980) put it.

## **4.2 Different approaches to the study of policy-making**

### **General approaches**

There are varied approaches to the study of policy-making. In general, researchers employ relevant theories as the basis of their approach to policy-making. The module on policy-making in education of the Open University listed the four kinds of theoretical approaches

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which follow (The Open University, 1986, pp. 69-79):

(1) Systems theory: It is chiefly concerned with how particular policies are made, modified, and implemented;

(2) Pluralism: It is a theory of the distribution of influence over decision-making in society and is concerned with which groups contribute to the decisions, and with why certain policies and not others are made;

(3) Marxism: It emphasises social control and national interest. The economy is seen as the source of change;

(4) Neo-liberalism: The essence of the neo-liberal position is its critique of the welfare state. At the basis of the critique is the view that individuals know better than the state.

In the study of policy-making of the above, systems theory and pluralism are comparatively more common than Marxism and neo-liberalism. Especially noteworthy, pluralism has been developed and utilised for a long time because of the public need to participate in policy-making. Maurice Kogan's research into educational policy-making through the study of interest groups and Parliament was an obvious example of a discussion of the application of mentioned pluralism (Kogan, 1975).

The analysis of policy-making can be conducted via different models based on different theories. Thomas Dye listed eight models for analysing policy-making, each of which has a different view on policy (Dye, 1984):

(1) Institutional model: The model defines policy as an institutional output, focusing on the analysis of institutional characters;

(2) Process model: The model defines policy as a political activity, focusing on the operation of political processes;

(3) Group model: The model defines policy as a result of the need for group equilibrium, focusing on negotiation of different pressure groups;

(4) Elite model: The model defines policy as an elite preference, focusing on how the elite formulates policies;

(5) Rational model: The model defines policy as a maximum social gain, supposing policy-making is a rational process;

(6) Incremental model: The model defines policy as variations on the past, focusing on the gradual modification on policies;

(7) Game model: The model defines policy as a rational choice in competitive situations, focusing on the comparison between benefits and losses;

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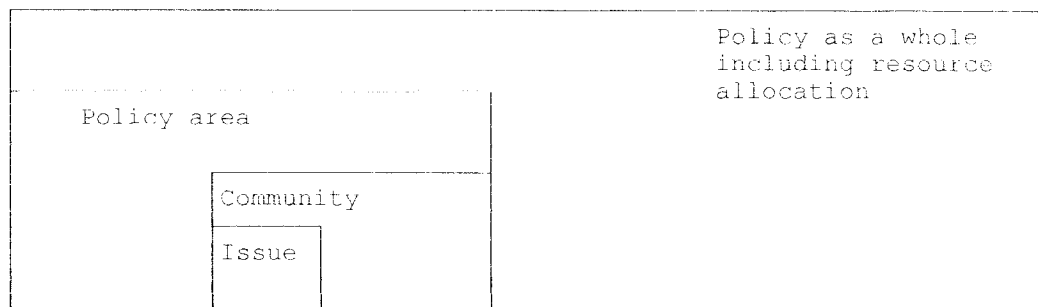
(8) System model: The model defines policy as a system output, focusing on the systematic analysis of policies.

The above eight models partly connect with various theoretical approaches to policy analysis. For example, the group model (3) has similarities to the pluralist theory. The rational model (5) and incremental model (6) are related to the two classic theories of policy-making developed by Herbert Simon (1969) and Charles Lindblom (1959). The game model (7) is a current common quantitative method for policy-making in management science.

Both Dye (1984) and the Open University (1986) applied systems theory as a model to analyse policy-making. As discussed before, policy problems have distinctive characteristics, above all their complexity and uncertainty. Since policy-making involves diverse factors, analysts need a systematic approach to attain a deep and whole understanding. Systems theory would be able to satisfy this need via its analysis of relevant factors inside and outside the system. For instance, Jenkins pointed out that a public policy is best understood by considering the operation of a political system in its environment and by examining how such a system maintains itself and changes over time (Jenkins, 1978, p. 21). Since ACE policy is the sort of public policy which has a close relationship with the public, systems theory will be helpful for understanding ACE through analysing factors inside and outside the political system, ie, the DFE.

The analysis of policy-making, or in a broader sense, policy, can be perceived with respect to different scopes and levels. Hogwood (1991) suggested four levels of generalisation about policy, as shown in Figure 4.2.





**Figure 4.2** Different levels of generalisation about policy  
**Source.** Hogwood, 1991, p. 15.

As Hogwood (1991) discussed, we can identify different levels of generalisation about policy, from dealing with an individual policy issue, to all issues as a whole, either in terms of common patterns among issues or in terms of determining priorities among them. 'Policy communities' as a focus suggests that much of the political processing of issues takes place not at the level of the policy area or department, but in more delimited 'policy communities'. 'Policy as a whole', including resource allocation, especially draws attention to the importance of features of the social and economic environment which appear relevant to policy-making, comprising economic resources, their growth and distribution, and their association with political demands and resources. This focus has usually been developed through the system model.

### **Studying educational policy-making in Britain**

Research into educational policy-making in Britain has been influenced by that on public policy in the USA since the 1960s. Educational policy is seen as public policy. Policy analysts tend to utilise research findings from studies of public policy to analyse educational policy.

British research upon educational policy-making is limited. The literature can be classified into four patterns: examination of the relationship between politics and educational policy-making; study of the role of the state in educational policy-making; exploration of the role

of pressure groups in educational policy-making; systems analysis of educational policy-making.

***Examination of the relationship between politics and educational policy-making***

Policy itself is very political in character. It is a product of the political process. In terms of the education of adults, Evans (1987) indicated that it is a political activity since the policies which shape it are decided by the public authorities. Researchers have tended to study educational policy-making in the light of politics. Specific political ideologies may sharply influence educational policy-making. For instance, Ball (1990) examined politics and policy-making in education from a sociological perspective. He especially emphasised the influence of the New Right on educational policy-making. The school system also may be impacted by politics. Locke (1974) investigated how power and politics operate in the school system. He analysed different power sources including central and local governments, the unions, pressure groups, school authority, and experts, and the interaction among them in policy formation in the school system.

The ideological differences among political parties is reflected in educational policy-making. In probing into the relationship between politics and educational policy-making, certain researchers have analysed the influences of the different political parties on educational policy-making. Juggernaut's analysis of Thatcher's educational policy and practice, 1979-1989, from an international perspective with its focus on Tory ideas is an example (Juggernaut, 1995). His main conclusion is that the Thatcher government educational policy, as seen in the MSC, for example, was mostly subverted and subordinated to the needs and interests of a 'client government' dominated by a powerful 'client group', ie, the industrial client group. Lawton (1992) reviewed the relationship between education and politics by examining the politics, ideologies, and educational policy of the Conservative and the Labour Parties up to the 1990s. He stressed the impact of political ideologies upon specific educational policy, for example, the creation of the 1988 ERA, which is a typical product of the Conservative Party. Molyneux, Low and Fowler (1988) collected data from three parties, the Conservative, Labour, and Social Democratic Parties, and studied politics and

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progress in recurrent education. They tried to point out the different viewpoints of politicians and their influences but their achievement was limited due to the shortage of data.

Examination of the relationship between politics and educational policy-making has an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is that this approach directly connects politics with education policy-making via discussion of the ideologies of political parties. It shows the influences of the ideologies of political parties on educational policy-making. The disadvantage is that although politics plays a vital part in educational policy-making, it is only one source of influence. If researchers concentrate merely on politics, excluding other dimensions which exert a real impact, for example, economic development, they may lose sight of certain significant facts and the ideal of achieving a complete analysis of educational policy-making.

#### ***Study of the role of the state in educational policy-making***

The study of the role of the state in educational policy-making is another British approach. 'State' here means the government of a country. As for ACE, its development has a close relationship with the government. Evens (1987, p. 1) pointed out that although the origins of adult education lie in the voluntary sectors, since the First World War the role of the state has become steadily more significant in its development. The historical reviews in chapters 2 and 3 also support Evens's view. British researchers have become increasingly involved in studying the role of the state in educational policy-making. Since the mid-1970s there has been an increase in work on the theory of the state. Concepts of unity or 'stratification' began to infiltrate documentation as theories of organisational management and efficient, economically viable national development found acceptance amongst, for example, the New Right (White and Crump, 1993). Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992) developed a state control model to analyse the policy process, stressing that the state, LEAs, and schools are differently empowered, over time, within the policy process. In their view, different levels of authority influence differently educational policy-making. Green's research (Green, 1990) upon education and state formation from a historical perspective can also be seen as a study

of the role of the state in education and educational policy-making, and can be especially helpful in a historical analysis.

In order to study the role of the state in educational policy-making, researchers have usually cited the relevant political theories and then discussed the role of political parties in policy-making. In this way, this approach is similar to the one used by researchers who analyse the relationship between politics and educational policy-making. For instance, when exploring policy process in the modern capitalist state, Ham and Hill (1993) applied pluralist theory, elite theory, Marxist theory, and corporatist theory to explain the role of the state. They concluded that according to the various theories, the state may play a differential role in educational policy-making. Yet, their research is too broad to gain a specific understanding of policy process. Jarvis (1993) probed the relationship between the state and adult education to clarify the politics of adult education. He referred to four kinds of recent political ideologies: radicalism, social reformism, liberalism, and conservatism, in describing the role of the state in adult education policy-making. According to Jarvis(1993), these different political ideologies maintain different priorities for adult education policy. Radicalism, for instance, actively asks the state for more funding to develop adult education. Social reformism highlights the social function of adult education. Since the state (government) is organised by the political party in power, another perspective from which to study the state's effect on educational policy-making is ideologies of the political parties. Dale (1989) mostly focused on political party ideologies to discuss the state and educational policy-making. For example, he devoted some space to illustrating the outcomes and effects of Thatcherism on education. One of the main consequences listed by Dale (1989), is lower levels of funding, especially in the non-compulsory sectors of education.

The study of the role of the state in educational policy-making has its strengths and limitations. The strength is that it indicates the importance of the state's role in educational policy-making. By making clear the role of the state in policy-making, we are able to realise how the power and ideology of the state are reflected in educational policy-making. The weakness is that since the state plays such a key role in educational policy-making, we may

be inclined to forget that a number of other influences outside the state on educational policy-making are significant as well. Further, in a democratic country, the state is required to form policy through a democratic process, which will reflect the opinions of relevant professional groups and people in policy-making. By the democratic process of policy-making, influences outside the state can be produced.

***Exploration of the role of pressure groups in educational policy-making***

Pressure groups usually represent collective interests. In a modern diverse society, there are many different pressure groups which may play a significant role in educational policy-making.

Investigating a specific pressure group or examining groups in general are common approaches. In their study of educational policy-making, McNay and Ozga (1985) examined the role of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the major pressure group on representing school teachers in Britain, in educational policy-making. They described the struggle of the NUT and its influence on educational policy-making. Kogan's study of interest groups and Parliament in educational policy-making was an example of an exploration of the role of pressure groups (Kogan, 1975). He discussed various interest groups including the older groups, for example, the Local Authority Association and Teacher's Association, parental groups and private foundations. He also included one case study each of higher education and comprehensive secondary education to analyse the involvement of interest groups in educational policy-making. In spite of the early date of this research, it offered a helpful approach to exploring the role of pressure groups.

Exploration of the role of pressure groups in educational policy-making is based on the concept of pluralism. Unlike elitism, pluralism argues that policy-making contains multiple centres of power and development of policy should be through competing interests. Pluralism advocates a process of democratic participation in policy-making. In a multiple class society, each class usually has its own interests and source of power. When the government formulates policy, it is as part of a network of bargaining and negotiating with

other pressure groups. The main merits of pluralism are that it can meet the demands of the democratic process and participation and protects the right of power-sharing among specific classes and groups. The prime difficulty pluralism may suffer from is that in a multiple class society it is hard to achieve equitable distribution of the right of participation. In addition, developing partnerships and reaching consensus are very time- and cost-consuming. If bargaining and negotiation fail, conflicts will easily follow. Thus, after assessing the relationship between partnership, pluralism and education policy, Gewirtz and Ozga (1990) suggested researchers first concentrate on understanding partnership among various policy-makers from the perspective of ideology, and interpret the primary function of that partnership. Secondly, researchers have to link the partnership to a state-centred theoretical framework to clarify the power centre. In this way, if researchers can focus more attention on the ideological differences among the various partners of educational policy-making and refer to the role of the state, study of the pluralist approach may prove more valuable.

#### ***Systems analysis of educational policy-making***

Applying systems theory to analyse educational policy-making is another approach of British researchers. Howell and Brown (1983) gave a helpful example that applies systems theory to the study of educational policy-making. They employed Easton's systems theory (Easton, 1979) as the theoretical framework, utilising two educational case studies to investigate policy-making: the Inner London Education Authority's Review of its Vocational Further Education Service, 1970-73 and the introduction of the University of London's Bachelor of Education Degree, 1963-70. The approach was an examination of the importance of each variable Easton (1979) had listed in his model and a relationship which included the processing of demands, the generation of support, and feedback response. Their major conclusion was that the elements of Eastonian systems analysis are interdependent.

Because of the insufficiency of British literature, we have to refer to studies in the USA. More American researchers have applied systems theory to study public policy. For example, Krone (1980) employed systems analysis, linking theory to practice, to develop a systems policy analysis framework. He defined the system as a complex set of interacting elements

by which policy-making could be comprehensively explained. Dye (1984) indicated that according to the system model, policy is the response of a political system to forces brought to bear upon it from the environment. Systems theory portrays public policy as an output of the political system. By stressing the effect of the environment, systems theory offers a more comprehensive and broader approach for the study of policy than others.

Jenkins (1978) gave us a particular instance of the use of systems theory in analysing British public policy. As he argued, public policy is best understood by considering the operation of a political system in its environment, and by examining how such a system maintains itself and changes over time (Jenkins, 1978, p. 21). Clearly, systems analysts not only highlight the influence of the environment but review the political system via study of the relationship between politics and policy. Most importantly, systems analysts have pointed out that politics is not the sole influence. For instance, as Jenkins (1978) put it, social-economic variables have relatively high explanatory power in terms of policy when the latter is measured by the levels of taxes and expenditures of the state. Since educational policy is public policy, it can be analysed through the above approach.

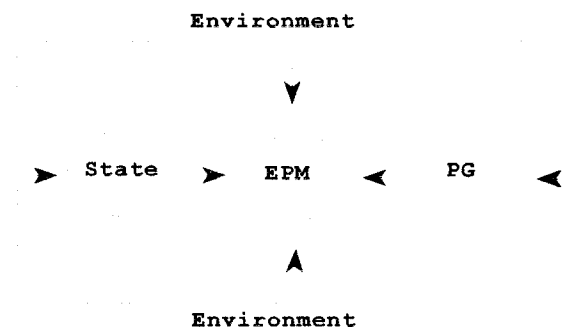
The prime advantage of systems theory in analysing educational policy-making is that it can broaden dimensions relating to policy-making. More particularly, it emphasises the significance of the environment inside and outside of the context in which policy-making is conducted. Because of the continuing changes within and complicated character of the environment, it also indicates the possible problematic character of policy analysis. By systems analysis, researchers are able to discuss relevant factors in a wider context. In terms of the scope analysed, systems analysis can comprise the other three approaches above: examination of the relationship between politics and educational policy-making, study of the role of the state in educational policy-making, and exploration of the role of pressure groups in educational policy-making.

The possible difficulty systems analysis may pose is that due to the continuing changes in and complexity of the environment, it is not easy to illustrate all relevant factors. Analysing

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and filtering through factors may become a critical task of policy analysis. Additionally, the obscure nature of the system in which systems analysis is applied may affect the validity of the research because sometimes it is difficult to define the system. An understanding of the system should be the starting point for use of systems analysis. The researcher will discuss this point below.

To sum up, the approaches applied to the study of British educational policy-making can be integrated as in Figure 4.3.



**Note.** EPM: Educational policy-making

PG: Pressure group

**Environment:** The context inside and outside the system in which policies are formulated.

**Figure 4.3** Approaches applied to the study of British educational policy-making.

As Figure 4.3 shows, if educational policy-making is the object of study, there are four main approaches to be applied for different kinds of evaluations. In view of the close relationship between the study of politics and the study of the role of the state in educational policy-making, these two approaches have been combined into one figure, as displayed in Figure 4.3.

According to Figure 4.3, three main approaches to the study of British educational policy-making have been utilised: examination the role of the state, exploration of the role of



pressure groups, and stress on the influence of the environment. Environment denotes whatever is inside and outside the system in which educational policies are formed. It may be the source of various influences. Basically, examination of the role of the state is politics-oriented, focusing on the ideology and power of the government in educational policy-making. Exploration of the role of pressure groups is pluralism-oriented, concentrating on the distribution of interests and the power sharing among distinct educational policy-makers. Emphasising the role of the environment is systems-oriented, highlighting the impact of the context inside and outside the system in which educational policy-making is made. In terms of the scope, systems analysis employs a broader perspective and can comprise the other two approaches.

### **4.3 Application of systems theory in policy-making**

#### **The notion of systems**

A system is an organic entity made up of interdependent parts, each of which has a role to play in the maintenance of the system. A system is seen as an entity composed of (Immegart and Pilecki, 1974, p. 30):

- (1) a number of parts;
- (2) the relationships of these parts;
- (3) the attributes of both the parts and relationships.

The system defined by Immegart and Pilecki (1974) is a closed one because it has no interaction with the environment. Kowalski (1988) however, stressed that a system is defined as a set of elements standing in relation to themselves and with the environment. This kind of system is an open one.

Krone's definition of system is more comprehensive. He stated that a system is a complex set of interacting elements. It is characterised by wholeness, organised complexity, interdependence, reciprocal dependence, dynamics, components of inputs, people, structure, process, outputs, and boundaries, interchanges with its environments, equifinality, Gestalt

phenomenon, and health and/or pathologies (Krone, 1980, p. 14). Krone's definition of a system encompasses open and closed systems.

In essence, systems theory attempts to integrate two strands of organisational theory: one concerned with the structures of organisations, and the other concerned with the behaviour of individuals within organisations. Its main assumptions are as follows:

- (1) A system is a set of interdependent parts. Actions or changes in one part of the system will affect the other parts;
- (2) Systems have needs. Organisations, as social systems, have needs which they must satisfy to survive;
- (3) Systems can act. This means that the decisions and actions of individuals and groups within organisations can be seen as actions of the organisations.

The assumptions above reveal why a system is described as an organic entity. It is organised into a set of interdependent parts. It has needs to be satisfied in order to survive. It can and must act through the decisions and actions of individuals and groups within organisations. Systems have different levels and areas. Small systems may become a part of large systems and are then generally named 'subsystems'. For example, further education is a subsystem of the whole education system. There are also subsystems within further education, for example further education colleges. Additionally, the DFE was a subsystem of the central government. The Further Education and Higher Education Branches, which are in charge of further and higher education, were subsystems of the DFE. Each subsystem has a set of independent parts, and has a close relationship with other subsystems and with the whole system.

### **The types of systems**

Systems are usually simply divided into open and closed systems. These two basic types of systems are (Immegart and Pilecki, 1973, p. 31):

- (1) Open systems are those which exchange matter and energy with their environment;
- (2) Closed systems are self-contained, and are unaffected by other systems or their environment.

Besides the above simple classification, two other types of systems may be distinguished: partially open system and loosely-coupled systems. The difference between open and partially open systems is in degree. Partially open systems have less interaction with their environment than open systems. As to loosely-coupled systems, they are characterised by a high degree of autonomy between their interdependent parts and isolation between strata.

In practice, most systems are open or partially open. More particularly, those systems in which public policies are formed and conducted usually perform as open systems. At least, they are partially open systems since they tend to interact with their major client: the public. These systems need be very sensitive to and responsive to the public. For example, when policy-makers form an ACE policy, it would be helpful for them to think of the national economic conditions, social trends, adult needs and so on. Policy-makers in the DFE were not encouraged to formulate their national policy merely inside the department, isolated from other government departments, educational pressure groups, and the public. In general, discussion of a policy between the DFE and outsiders took place through White Papers, the Education Secretary's speeches, debates in the House of Common, and relevant documents. In this view, the DFE was an open system rather than a closed one totally separate from the environment.

### **The properties of open systems**

There are distinct differences in characteristics between open and closed systems. According to Immegart and Pilecki ( 1973, pp. 39-45), their differences are as follows:

- (1) Inputs and outputs: The action of the open system involves the transmission of inputs, or action stimuli into outputs-terminal results or outcomes;
- (2) Steady state: Open systems maintain themselves at a high level of integration as typified by the dynamic ratio of system components and properties;
- (3) Self-regulation: The open system itself orders and controls the forces that affect it;
- (4) Equifinality: Open systems have the capacity to achieve identical results from different conditions or by the employment of different processes;
- (5) Dynamic interaction: The open system maintains itself through the dynamic interaction of functional subsystems;

#### ***Chapter 4 Systems Analysis of Policy-making***

(6) Feedback: Feedback is the evaluation or monitoring process whereby open systems assess their outputs and their processes;

(7) Progressive segregation: This is the process of division into a functional and hierarchical ordering of subsystems;

(8) Progressive mechanisation: This means that in all open systems there is an ordering of certain procedures or processes into fixed arrangements;

(9) Negentropy: The open system has great control over its existence and destiny. It can choose whether or not to fight entropy or to maximise its existence.

The above nine properties of open systems require more research to be examined properly. Some of the properties are a bit ideal, for example, self-regulation (3) and negentropy (9). Since open systems interact with their environment, although they may be in a steady state (2), they need to adjust themselves in a timely manner according to the results of interaction. It is quite possible that an open system may have to change its structure or direction of development. In terms of ACE, for instance, the previous MSC and current NCVQs both were set up mostly to meet the requirements of economic regeneration. The MSC and NCVQs were the products of their time and environment. They are the results of central government departments that adjusted themselves to their changing surroundings. Through the MSC and NCVQs, the DFE and other departments, for example, the previous Department for Employment had increased opportunities for interaction.

It has to be emphasised that systems theory is just one of the approaches to studying educational policy-making, not the only one. Its feasibility and contributions depend on research purposes and policy traits. As the tutors at the Open University concluded, the systems approach to politics does not provide a full explanation of policy-making. Systems theory concentrates on the general properties of systems and on exchanges across system boundaries. It is possible to avoid some of the problems associated with a strong emphasis on system equilibrium (The Open University, 1986). Nevertheless, when the aim is to attain a whole understanding of the relationship among the interdependent parts of a system and its interaction with its inter and outer environment, systems theory can provide a useful analytic framework.

## **4.4 Evaluation of systems theory**

### **Evaluation of the systems framework**

The framework originating in systems theory for analysing policy is not without its shortcomings. According to Hall et al (1975) and Hogwood (1991), the strengths and weaknesses of systems theory are as follows:

#### ***Strengths of the systems framework***

(1) The systems framework points to the relationship among demands, the political system, the outputs of the system, and the impact of these outputs in terms of stabilising the environment and provoking new demands. It emphasises these central features of the policy process.

(2) It provides us with a framework in which we can try to understand how changes in the social and economic environment are followed by changes in the outputs of government and in the structure of the political system.

(3) The framework also stresses the cyclical nature of much policy-making: policies produce impacts which may in turn set off new demands or stronger or weaker support for government. In other words, there is feedback from outputs to inputs and throughput.

(4) The framework defines a system as a dynamic and organic organisation. It gives a system biological functions. A system then is able to act, to grow, and to change. Individuals, conventions, legislation, organisational behaviour, and so forth inside a system become interactive interdependent parts. In a continually changing environment, the systems framework can perform as a positive factor and adjustable attribute.

These four strengths of the systems framework show that systems theory prompts a macro approach. It divides the policy process into three stages: input, throughput, and output, linking the impacts of the outer social and economic environment. There is interaction between the three stages and the environment and then the cyclical feedback moves from outputs to the previous two stages.

***Weaknesses of the systems framework***

(1) The systems framework says nothing about how inputs are transformed into outputs. It treats the policy-making process as a 'black box'. It tells us nothing about the distribution of power or the substance of policies.

(2) The relative importance of ideological and technical factors in determining how many and which demands are excluded from or fail to reach the head of the queue remains a mystery.

(3) The systems framework operates at too high a level of generality. Having stated that the political system maintains its existence by responding to the changes in the environment, it has relatively little to tell us about which changes matter politically and why particular policies are evolved in response to them.

(4) The logical ordering of the systems framework might seem to imply that policy-making only follows from and reflects demand articulation. It ignores the possibility that government may use their power overtly, or more subtly, to limit the kinds of demands that are made.

(5) The systems approach to politics does not provide a full explanation of policy-making. Systems theory concentrates on the general properties of systems and on the exchanges across systems boundaries.

The above weaknesses of systems frameworks have mostly resulted from their application of a macroscopic view rather than a microscopic perspective. The systems framework provides us with the broad context within which the policy process operates. The limitation is that some things may remain unexplained such as the detailed operation of the political process and its possible impact on selecting and reacting to the demands of different clients in the environment. The three stages of the systems framework show a linear and cyclical process of policy-making but this may give the idea that a policy is always formed regularly, reasonably, and gradually. In practice, this sort of explanation may not be adequate to describe the policy process in detail.

As for this research, discovering the relationship between the input, throughput, and output

of ACE policy-making and exploring the demands from and influential factors in the environment were its main purposes. The strengths of systems theory can achieve the above purposes. The political process which is seen as a 'black box' in the systems framework, is not the focus of this research. In order to avoid the weaknesses of the systems framework, the researcher has extended the variety of samples for data collection and interviewed policy-makers to gain insights into the political process. This method is in line with Hogwood's proposal about, 'developing the systems framework in more detail in terms of the organisation involved' (Hogwood, 1991).

**The reasons why systems theory was exploited for this research.**

Although systems theory is only one of the approaches to studying policy-making, it was applied as the theoretical framework for this research for the reasons below.

(1) Systems analysis is a comparatively suitable approach.

As Figure 4.1 indicates, compared with other approaches applied to the study of British educational policy-making, systems analysis can offer a more comprehensive and deeper understanding from a wider perspective. It is more suitable to utilise systems analysis than merely to use the state or pressure groups approaches, which are narrower in scope than systems analysis.

(2) Systems theory was able to meet the purposes of this research. Exploring the demands and influential factors affecting ACE policy-making in England and Wales was the principal purpose of the research. Since systems theory includes the inter and outer environment in which policy-making is made, it was helpful in discovering the significant factors involved. As Howell and Brown (1983) noted, systems analysis cannot account for the choice of specific policies but it can indicate the prime common features of policy-making and show what to look for in any particular policy-making situation. This point is also one of the reasons why the researcher applied systems analysis to obtain a general picture of ACE policy-making rather than analysing a specific policy through case studies.

(3) Education policy is public policy

Since education policy is public policy, it needs to be especially responsive to environmental factors inside and outside the policy-making context which systems theory

focuses on. As we know, further education is a subsystem of the whole education system and, in terms of legislation, ACE is a part of further education. ACE policy is public policy. It is imperative that policy-makers consider client needs and the impact of the environment, for example the socio-economic situation, when making a decision.

(4) Examining the feasibility of system theory in analysing ACE policy-making

As discussed above, British researchers paid less attention to utilising system analysis in policy studies than did their counterparts in the USA. In terms of general educational policy-making, the literature about systems theory is still rare in Britain. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile examining systems theory in analysing British educational policy-making. Especially important, in ACE policy-making, this examination can be seen as an encouraging trial run and may open a path towards the study of policy-making via systems theory. Depending on the research purposes, the researcher argues that it is time to apply systems theory and examine its feasibility for analysing educational policy-making.

As chapters 2 and 3 have shown, ACE policy in England and Wales is influenced by a variety of factors including political, economic, social, educational, and learner ones. These factors stem mostly from the changing inter and outer context in which ACE policies are formulated. The historical review of ACE policy shifts in England and Wales has also shown how these factors change with the times. For example, the ideologies of the different political parties in power, and most obviously, the different economic conditions of different times have exerted a sharp impact upon ACE policy. Because of the nature of British cases, systems theory can be suitably applied in exploring these varied factors and their relationships.

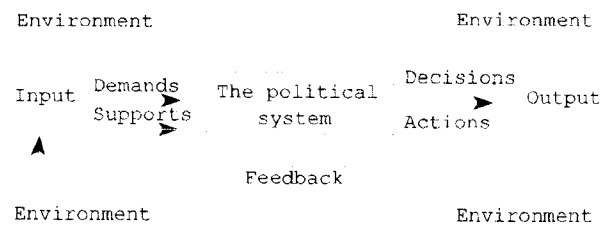
## **4.5 Analysing policy-making through systems theory**

### **Two systems models**

#### ***Easton's model***

David Easton (1979) employed a simplified model of a political system based on the open systems theory. This model has become the typical systems model cited by followers of his approach. Easton's model is shown in Figure 4.4.



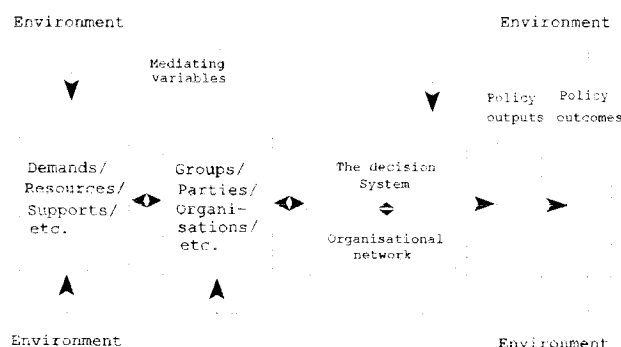


**Figure 4.4** A simplified model of a political system.  
**Source.** Easton, 1979, p. 32.

Figure 4.4 illustrates that under the influence of the environment, policy-makers in the political system input demands and supports to form decisions and actions and then output policies. After the output stage, there is feedback from the output to the input to provide information for evaluating or modifying the policy-making. Obviously, both demands and supports play significant parts in formulating decisions and actions. According to Easton, the demands include expectations, public opinions, motivations, ideologies, interests, and preferences. Supports refer to deciding and selecting the demands that are deemed to merit special consideration. They fall into two categories. One is called the overt support and it comprises supportive action. The other is called the covert support, and includes support attitudes (Easton, 1979). The political community and the educational authorities are all sources of supports.

### ***Jenkins's model***

Jenkins (1978) offered an amended form of Easton's system model, as shown in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4.5** Amended systems model of the policy process.  
**Source.** Jenkins, 1978, p. 22.

As Figure 4.5 lists, Jenkins (1978) added resources to the input and added mediating variables, which include groups, parties, and other organisations, between the input and the political system. Jenkins divided the political system into two parts: the decision system and the organisational network. As for the environmental variables, Jenkins listed social-economic, physical, and political factors that vary over time (Jenkins, 1978). Jenkins's model would be practical for analysing policy by systems theory. Especially, when the research purpose is to explore the important input and environmental variables and to discover the relationship among these diverse variables, Jenkins's model can provide policy analysts with a comprehensive systems analysis framework.

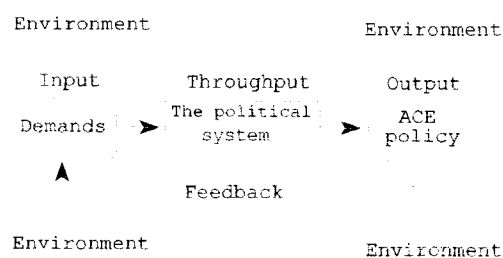
Both Easton (1979) and Jenkins (1978) applied the idea of open systems theory to construct their models. These models are useful for analysing educational policy-making, above all public policy closely relating to the inter and outer policy context. For instance, Easton's classification of demands, expectations, public opinions, and interests may reflect the needs of the public. In Jenkins's model, the environment variables, particularly the socio-economic factors, may play an influential role in the decision of educational policy-making.

### The system model for this research

As chapter 1 explained, the chief purposes of this research were to explore the influential factors affecting ACE policy in England and Wales and to look at the relationship between

them and other variables. In view of this research purposes, the researcher chose systems theory to develop the theoretical framework.

This research was based on a modified model of open systems theory as the theoretical framework. The main focus was on input, output, and environmental variables as listed in Easton's (1979) and Jenkins's (1978) systems models. The model applied in this research is as follows.



**Environment:** The context inside and outside the DFE, including political, economic, social, educational, and Learner factors.

**Figure 4.6** The systems model for this research.

As shown in Figure 4.6, demands expressed by people involved in ACE were the input variables. To be specific, the expectations and opinions of administrators in the LEAs, lecturers in higher education institutions, leaders of professional organisations, and adult educators formed the demands. National ACE policies ranked by relevant people were the output variables. Environmental variables comprised political, economic, social, educational, and learners' factors. The relationship between the demands and environmental variables and the influence of the demands and of the environmental variables on national ACE policies made up for analysis. The possible differences among the influence of environmental variables on national ACE policies was also discussed. These topics were analysed by the researcher by applying the Figure 4.6 model.

In this research, policy output was the dependent variable; the input was the independent

variable; and environmental factors were the outer variables. The chief purpose was to inquire into the impact of the independent variables and of the outer variable upon the dependent variable. This kind of research design is similar to what Jenkins (1978) called 'output studies'. Jenkins pointed out that the pillars of output studies have been two: economic development analysis and a simplified input-output model of the Eastonian type (Jenkins, 1978, p. 49). Whereas, for this research the researcher used a simplified Eastonian systems model to explore the impact of input and the environmental variables upon output, economic development has also been a strong factor affecting national ACE policy-making in England and Wales.

As seen in Figure 4.2, the researcher studied 'ACE policy as a whole'. Therefore, it was helpful to apply systems theory in the analysis of those features of the environment relating to ACE policy-making.

### **Summary**

Policy analysis is research upon policy-making. Given the nature of public policy, open systems theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for analysing ACE policy-making. As one kind of public policy, ACE policy is expected to be sensitive and be responsive to public demands and to the different conditions of the context in which it is made. The researcher applied a modified open systems model to explore the influences of input and environmental variables on national ACE policy-making in England and Wales.

## **Chapter 5**

### **FORMULATION OF NATIONAL ACE POLICY**

Since the focus of this research was on *national* ACE policy-making, the DFE needed to be seen to have a major role, especially after it had increased its power. As have shown before, there have been changes of national ACE policy-making in England and Wales. The role which the DFE had played in ACE policy-making could have a close relationship with these changes. An illustration into the process of policy formulation in the DFE would be useful for understanding the reasons of changes and how the DFE reacted to those influential factors. The process of policy-making in the DFE was very complicated. If the process could be analysed via systems theory to have a macro understanding, its complexity would decrease. Then we could attain a comparatively clear profile of policy-making in the DFE and include influential factors in this process for further research.

This chapter discusses the formulation of national ACE policy in England and Wales. It focuses on the role play of the major policy-maker, the DFE and its partners and then illustrates its policy formulation.

The chapter has four sections:

- 5.1 The DFE as a major policy-maker;
- 5.2 Policy-making in the DFE;
- 5.3 Evaluation of policy-making in the DFE;
- 5.4 Systems analysis of policy-making in the DFE.

#### **5.1 The DFE as a major policy-maker**

##### **The Department's role in national educational policy-making**

In Britain, the government led by the Cabinet is a critical policy-maker in national policy-making. British government is known as a 'Cabinet government'. In other words, the Cabinet is the actual organisation ruling the nation carrying out governmental functions. Bagehot describes the Cabinet as 'the instrument of "fusion" between the executives and legislative

branches of government (Bagehot, 1963). Greenwood and Wilson (1984) explain that the Cabinet has three major functions: policy-making, administrative control, and coordination and delimitation. In terms of the function of policy-making, the Cabinet is the ultimate policy-making body within the central administration. In general, less important policies are normally made within departments, or where several departments are involved, by inter-departmental or Cabinet committees. Urgent major decisions may be taken by the Prime Minister alone or in consultation with chief ministers, or by an inner or partial Cabinet. Although the time of Cabinet meeting is too short to make all policies, some policies are formulated through Cabinet discussion, in which relevant ministers are included.

The DFE was the main Department for formulating national educational policy in the cabinet. Toby has indicated that the DFE was essentially a policy-making body, not an executive agency. Its policy-making functions extended from defining specific policies to establishing a general framework governing the direction, pace, and scale of developments in the education service (Toby, 1979, p. 14). In the process of policy-making in the DFE, ministers, civil servants, and HM Inspectors were the three governmental policy agents. The Minister of State, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, and Permanent Secretary, who worked to the Secretary of State, were responsible for particular national educational policies. As Ashford puts it, compared to most modern democracies, British policy-making is remarkably concentrated in the Cabinet and the higher civil service (Ashford, 1981). National educational policies therefore mainly came from the DFE.

Generally, we could say British national educational policy was formulated in a perspective of pluralism by policy-makers in the DFE. When discussing educational policy-making and planning in the central government, Fenwick and McBride pointed out that the British government's policy may well be dependent upon cooperation with its powerful partners. All Ministers are aware of the need to work in partnership with a pluralist system (Fenwick and McBride, 1981). Richardson and Jordon (1979) also noted that the main criticism of the system of central policy-making is that policy is made through a process of departmental pluralism. Departments are characteristically in competition in policy-making, battling over

administrative territory to obtain resources. Specifically speaking, from 1979 to 1988, various industrials and groups in influencing the Secretary of State for Education and the Prime Minister have different advisers. For instance, as Whitty and Menter (1989) indicated, the individuals who seemed to have most influence on Mrs Thatcher included Oliver Letwin, Baroness Cox, and Brian Griffiths. Kenneth Baker while listening to the views of right-wing ideologies, also had to listen much more than Thatcher to the professionals - civil servants, Her Majesty's Inspectors, educationalists and (occasionally) teachers. Some organised right-wing pressure groups, such as the Institute for Economic Affairs and the Social Affairs Unit, had been active across a wide spectrum of political issues, particularly with regard to privatisation. The Council for Educational Standards and the Hillgate Group had been more directly concerned with the content of education and the efforts of comprehensive schooling and examination reform. The Centre for policy Studies had produced pamphlets on opting out and on the English curriculum. No matter whether the partnership is based on cooperation or competition, the pluralist approach means that national policies are not formulated merely by a sole policy-maker. However, the extent and sufficiency of pluralism needs to be further examined later.

Hall et al (1975, p. 127) showed that the policy process could be regarded as pluralist in two senses. Firstly, it exhibits the diversity in a visible, structural sense, and many different institutions are involved. Secondly, and more importantly, the policy process could be characterised as plural in practice. The structural diversity is reflected in the range of values, interests, and viewpoints that could be detected in much policy-making. In ACE, the establishment of the MSC (later to become the Training Agency) in 1973 and NVQs has involved relevant departments such as the DFE and Department for Employment. The generation of MSC and NVQs also reflects the diversity of values and interests in the government and enterprises.

As to Parliament, that is, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, its role in national policy-making is not so significant as that of the Cabinet. Ashford (1981) indicated that Parliament has no direct role in policy-making. Richardson and Jordan (1979) also

concluded that by and large policies are not initiated in Parliament. Hall et al (1975) noted that government, not Parliament has the most fundamental and extensive powers in policy-making. Although Parliament is not the major policy-maker of national policy, it could still influence policy. National policies formed by the party in power may be discussed and voted on in Parliament. Through questioning by backbenchers and MPs of the opposition parties, national policies may be amended and improved in Parliament. As Sir Ron Dearing's experience shows, the Committees of Parliament consist of members of all political parties in Parliament and they invite senior policy-makers in the DFE to appear, give information and evidence to their Committees (Morgan, 1996). So, Parliament could have some impact on educational policy-making. The role of the Opposition is critical. It acquires direct influences over government's policy through criticism and attack, but it also shapes the environment in which the government operates. In Parliament, there is 'Opposition Days' for the Opposition. On 20 days in each parliamentary session the Opposition in the House of Commons could choose subjects for debates, giving it opportunities to criticise the Government. Of these days, 17 are at the disposal of the Leader of the Opposition and three at the disposal of the second-largest opposition party (Central Office of Information, 1994). Discussion, questioning, and criticism of policies in Parliament also show a pluralist style of policy-making.

### **The tradition of decentralisation in educational policy-making**

Traditionally, LEAs were more autonomous in making educational policy and the previous DFE's powers were limited in Britain. It is often said that public education in Britain was a national service, but was locally administered. For instance, ACE was firstly served in local communities and developed into diverse provision for the different needs of local residents. Adult education centres and community schools have been the main institutions for adult learning. The DFE mainly enacted legislation and provided funding but did not directly run any provision of ACE. As the Expenditure Committee (1976) commented that 'Department of Education and Science is a Government department whose responsibilities are limited, although it exercises influence over a very wide front'.



### *Chapter 5 Formulation of National ACE Policy*

It is hard to analyse national educational policy in a situation in which policies are mostly formulated and carried out at local level. Because of the different characteristics of local communities, a variety of needs have been highlighted. For example, in communities where immigrants are the majority, teaching English as a second language (ESL) may be a priority in ACE. And, in industrial areas, workplace training for labours may take the first priority in ACE provision. In this situation, the power of the DFE was limited. However, the tradition has changed gradually since the 1970s. The 1988 ERA has brought a new power distribution in policy-making between central and local governments.

As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the DFE had increased its powers in educational policy-making by decreasing the powers of LEAs. The 1988 ERA altered the basic power structure of the education system. It increased the powers of the Secretary of State for Education, restored to the central government powers over the curriculum and set up formal machinery for exercising and enforcing these powers and responsibilities. LEAs' powers have been cut and they have lost greater autonomy to school governing bodies. The trend of centralisation particularly could be attributed to the influence of the Thatcher's government. In 'The Right Approach to the Economy' and in leading Conservatives' speeches in the late 1970s, the expectation was that the party's manifesto for the 1979 election would promote policies that accorded with a radical right view of state interventionism (Sullivan, 1992). The thought of state interventionism then could result in the central government's more involvement in making education policy which previously belonged to LEAs. The 1993 Education Act, by effectively removing the LEAs from the government of education, created the prospect of future bureaucratic centralisation that will distance the service from responding to local needs (Ranson, 1994). With the increase of the DFE's power, the above concern from outsiders would grow. Generally speaking, British educational policy-making has been transferred from a locally administered process to a centrally administered one. As Bowe, Ball and Gold put it, the growth of centrally administered policies, TVEI run by the DFE, both on a 'bid and deliver' basis, was an example of the state's growing control of education (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p. 7). Kogan also argued that the DES had increasingly gained powers as it had shifted from holding the ring between the other forces in educational policy-

making to enforcing controls and advancing more definite policies of its own making (Kogan, 1987, p. 225).

As showed in chapter 3, the Conservative Party had a great contribution to this change of educational policy-making. Since the mid-1970s, policy-making process in the British education system had undergone rapid and large-scale transformation. Moving from a 'clientist' system within a 'triangle of tension', the British system entered the period of 'Thatcherism'-a system motivated by the various components of New Right Thinking, the removal of pluralism and the assertion of economic control through centralisation (White and Crump, 1993). About ACE, the 1992 FHEA have distinctively reorganised the power structure. FEFCs and HEFCs had been set up to take most of the responsibilities transferred from LEAs, especially FEFCs. According to the Schedule 2, FEFCs have been mainly responsible for advanced continuing education, vocational education, and adult basic education. Although the DFE stressed the partnership between FEFCs and LEAs, the LEAs' powers in providing ACE have been limited in traditional liberal adult education which has gradually declined since the 1970s.

### **National ACE policy-making**

The DFE, HEFCs, and FEFCs had become the major policy-makers of national ACE policy since the 1992 FHEA took effect from 1 April 1993. Because of the focuses of this research, HEFCs would be comparatively less discussed. Following the Act, there are two FEFCs in England and Wales. The members of the Councils come from different fields including industrial, commercial, professional, and educational background. The diversity of the Councils' members means that the variety of demands may be claimed.

There are three ways in which the FEFC for England proposes to implement its policies (FEFC, 1993, p. 2):

(1) Advisory: in this mode the Council, having offered a preference for the development of a particular policy, would leave it for each college to determine whether or not it wished to pursue this particular option.

(2) Development: in this mode the Council would declare a preferred overall policy which it would wish to support through its method of allocating funds.

(3) Regulatory: in this mode the Council would have a declared policy and would require institutions to comply with it by attaching conditions to the use of its funds.

Accordingly, the FEFC carries out its policies through mandatory regulations and non-mandatory suggestions. As the FEFC points out, from time to time the Council could expect to receive guidance from the Education Secretary on the development of further education (FEFC, 1993, p. 2). In addition, since both FEFCs and HEFCs are semi-government's organisation, or 'quangos', we can imagine that the DFE would pass on its influences via these two sectors. The DFE actually had taken most of the powers and responsibilities in national ACE policy-making; above all, the Further Education Branch and the Higher Education Branch were most likely to be influential in ACE in the Department.

In addition to the DFE, HEFCs and FEFCs, some independent organisations might have a significant influence on national ACE policy. NIACE is a national membership organisation for adult learning, representing the interests of those concerned with the education and training of adults. NIACE is a registered charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. Since LEAs are its basic members and it was mostly funded by the DFE, NIACE may have a close relationship with government's departments. NIACE is funded by grants from the DFE, Welsh Office Education Department and the LEAs. Additionally, the funding for NIACE for specific research and development projects is provided by the Department for Employment, Department of the Environment, Training and Enterprise Councils and so on. NIACE therefore keeps close contacts with government departments and carries out a prime advocacy role in adult education and training policy. It helps providers and policy-makers in adult education and training to recognise the key role adult education has to play, and to keep their concerns and the interests of adult learners high on the public agenda.

ALBSU (now the Basic Skill Agency) is another example of an organisation likely to affect national ACE policy, especially on adult basic education. Like NIACE, ALBSU is an

### *Chapter 5 Formulation of National ACE Policy*

independent professional organisation. It is a national agency for basic skills in England and Wales. Basic skills are defined as the ability to read, write, and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general. In Wales, basic skills include the ability to read and write Welsh for people whose first language or mother tongue is Welsh. ALBSU is a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status, and its Patron is Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal. ALBSU is funded by the DFE and Welsh Office Education Department. ALBSU's two major responsibilities are: to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Secretary of State for Wales on adult literacy and basic skills matters, and to report each year to the Secretaries of State on the provision of adult literacy and basic skills, and the work of ALBSU. Like NIACE, ALBSU also may have significant influences on national ACE policy, directly involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making via regular or informal meetings.

Most interviewees at stage 2 indicated that policy-making in the DFE had a pluralist process. Mr Alex Kirwan in Further Education Branch said the Minister used to consult colleagues in other departments via regular or informal meetings when making policy. Leaders of main professional organisations such as Directors of NIACE and ALBSU were usually involved in ACE policy-making. Mr Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE, and Mr Alan Wells, Director of ALBSU, all mentioned that they had many opportunities of participation in the DFE's policy-making. Mr Tuckett further explained that NIACE actively contacts the Minister, MPs, and other relevant organisations to influence the DFE's ACE policy-making. The DFE's advisory bodies such as the previous FEU had contributions to ACE policy-making. Ms Anna Reisenberger in the FEU pointed out that except for policy recommendations in paper, the chairperson of the FEU had opportunities to be involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making via formal or informal occasions.

Besides the DFE, HEFCs, FEFCs, NIACE, and ALBSU, there are other possible sources of influence on national ACE policy in England and Wales. NIACE and ALBSU could be seen as non-departmental bodies. In governmental department, the previous Department for Employment and Department of Trade and Industry have significant impacts on vocational

adult education. The establishment of the MSC, NVQs and NETTs was an obvious case. LEAs could express their opinions in ACE through national association eg the Association of County Councils or through professional bodies eg the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives. The public, employers, professionals and other professional organisations are able to influence national ACE policy through lobbying and debates on White Papers. Sometime government departments commission academic staff to do research on specific topics. When these projects are finished, some of the recommendations may produce influences on national policy-making. Additionally, as chapters 2 and 3 mentioned, recommendations of special Committees created for specific purposes may be cited as policies as well. But, no matter where the influences on national ACE policy come from, the DFE had gradually controlled the main power in making educational policy. It had become the prime policy-maker of national ACE policy.

## **5.2 Policy-making in the DFE**

Since the DFE had become the prime educational policy-maker, it was essential to review policy-making in the Department to explore the formulation of national ACE policy. Policy-making was a very complicated process in the DFE and it was difficult to discuss it in brief. For example, policy-making in the DFE was not only formulated in the Department itself but might be discussed among MPs in the House of Commons, other departments, or in special Advisory Councils. The above processes might comprise the lobbying of pressure groups. Therefore, there might be a series of activities of consultations and discussion via coordinating ministers in bilateral or multilateral departments, Cabinet committees, in Cabinet itself and open discussion to the public.

Dividing policy-making into different stages is an useful approach. From the problem policy-makers want to resolve to the implementation of policy, policy-making may encompass several stages. Burch and Wood (1990) stressed that policy-making is not seen as static and motionless but as a continual operation. They list three phases of policy process: initiation, formulation, and implementation (Burch and Wood, 1990, p. 15). Through the discussion of different phases, it become easier to achieve a comprehensive understanding of policy-

making. About policy-making in the DFE, the researcher concluded four stages as follows, referring to Weaver's analysis of policy-making stages (Weaver, 1979).

### **Analysing problems, plans, and priorities**

Analysing problems, plans and priorities that were based on purposes of policy was the first stage of policy-making for policy-makers to conduct in the DFE. The purposes of policy usually originated from problems which would happen at present or possibly in future. In order to resolve problems, policy-makers tried to understand problems first by analysing where they come from, how to deal with them, and then decided the purposes of policy-making. According to the purposes, policy-makers then developed plans for policy formulation. When there were many problems, policy-makers decided the priorities based on the degree of urgency. In the first stage, the chief target was to obtain a general understanding in policy need and then to develop a basis of policy formulation.

Policy-making itself took on protean forms that defied tidy categorisation due to the difference of purposes or emphases. Weaver (1979, p. 52) indicated that:

When political administrators wish to emphasise the difficulty, complexity or magnitude of their task they talk in terms of problem-solving. When the emphasis is on the shape of things to come, on quantitative or systems analysis, or on the coordination of task, time, and resource, they talk of planning. When they focus attention on the objectives, strategies or programmes to which preference is to be given from many possible choices, they use the language of priority-fixing. When their major or immediate concern is with the interests and involvement of their clients, consultation and participation take first place in their thinking.

The various forms and focuses of policy-making above originated from the objectives developed from the analysing problems, plans, and priorities. Policy-makers decided the emphasis of policy after understanding problems, developing plans, and deciding priorities ; then went on to the formulation of policy.

### **Formulation of policy**

According to Weaver, this stage included seven phases: refinement of objectives and problems; intensive collection; analysis of information; choice and design of strategy options; judgement of probabilities; assessment of consequences and costs; testing of acceptability and practicability; ordering of preferences (Weaver, 1979, p. 55).

#### ***Refinement of objectives and problems***

Analysing problems, plans and priorities in the previous stage was further discussed at this stage. Policy-makers in the DFE analysed problems in detail, taking social or economic factors into account in a broad perspective. The objectives were defined as concretely as possible rather than vaguely or abstractly. For example, 'To expand adult education' was not concrete and it needed more explanation of reasons and problems.

#### ***Analysis of information***

Analysis of information was the basis upon which to develop policy options. In order to obtain useful information, policy-makers in the DFE tried to collect and analyse information regarding problems by accurately separating facts from opinions, rejecting the irrelevant ones, corroborating all hearsay and checking all sources. Resources such as time, and budgets were limited so how to analyse useful information efficiently was a great challenge for policy-makers.

#### ***Policy options***

Policy options were developed after the analysis of information. There might be a number of policy options for policy-makers in the DFE. For instance, in order to increase national advanced courses for adults in further education colleges, policy-makers might have options such as supplementing available subjects, and reorganising current courses. It was impossible for policy-makers to consider all of the strategy options in detail. They usually chose a few of options that possibly offer the best chance to achieve objectives.

***Forecasting probabilities***

Policy-makers in the DFE forecasted probabilities to increase the possibility of policy implementation in this phase. The probabilities included possible effects, difficulties, costs, reactions from the public and so on. Forecasting probabilities was the estimation of risk and prediction of the policy implementation. Because of the uncertainty of policy implementation, it was difficult to have an accurate and complete forecast even though the most sophisticated statistics such as Time Series was usually applied. For example, forecasting probabilities of policy for increasing national advanced courses in further education colleges might include whether it could stimulate the economic regeneration, whether employers' responses were positive and so forth.

***Assessment of consequences***

After the forecasting probabilities of policy, policy-makers in the DFE assessed consequences of policy implementation. Forecasting probabilities was only to predict the possible results of policy. This phase further aimed to practically assess the consequences. It made the forecast more helpful and assisted policy-makers to rank policy options according to each option's advantages and disadvantages. For instance, if extra funding was needed for increasing national advanced courses in further education colleges, how much did they need? Where did money come from? If adults' responses were negative, what was the cause? Was it possible to find out the answer? If increased national advanced courses were unable to meet the demands of employers, were there any other alternatives available? These were all examples of assessment of consequences.

***Coordination and consultation***

Policy-makers in the DFE were not entirely dependent on their own resources in tackling these many phases of policy formulation. They usually coordinated and consulted other departments or people in the central government or nongovernmental organisations. Coordination and consultation were not only to evaluate the acceptability and practicability of policy but helped policy-makers to get more available sources to develop policy. For example, in order to increase national advanced courses in further education colleges, the



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Finance Branch of the DFE might work out, in consultation with the Treasury, the future budget they would need. Policy-makers might coordinate with the previous Department for Employment on the labour plans. Policy-makers might look for suggestions from NIACE or FEU to realise what kinds of courses adults needed. The DFE might also commission professional researchers to do empirical surveys into the employers' responses and opinions.

#### ***Ordering preferences***

In the last phase of policy formulation, policy-makers in the DFE prepared for the ultimate consideration of ministers a statement of what were agreed within the Department to be the options most worth examining, with a note of the pros and cons of each (Weaver, 1979, p. 57). The pros and cons of each policy alternative were based on the analysis of previous phases. The list of ordered preferences might assist the top policy-maker to make an ideal decision.

#### **Determination of policy**

At this stage, the determination of policy was usually a decision for the Education Secretary. Before making a decision, the Secretary of State might seek advice from his/her personal advisors, ministers, and other colleagues through intra-departmental discussion, or consulted a number of people in other departments via inter-departmental coordination. If large expenditures or politically sensitive issues were involved, he/she would search for the specific support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Cabinet colleagues. He/She would be sensitive to and checked the reactions of his/her own supporters in the House of Commons, in his/her party and among representatives of local authorities (Weaver, 1979, p. 59). The end of this stage was marked by a public announcement of the policy the Secretary has decided to adopt.

If the DFE considered legislative proposals necessary to administer agreed policies more efficiently, Department's civil servants would prepare drafts bills to become Acts through second and third readings in the House of Commons. A policy acquired a different formal status when it was legitimated, for example, by being embodied in an Act of Parliament or

statutory instrument to permit or require an activity to take place. Here policy received formal authorisation (Hogwood, 1991, pp. 5-6). Public Bills could be introduced in either House. As a rule, however, government bills were likely to raise political controversy to go through the Commons before being discussed in the Lords, while those of a technical but non-political nature often passed through the Lords first. (Those dealing with law consolidation and law reform were always introduced in the House of Lords.) If a bill had a mainly financial purpose it was nearly always introduced in the Commons, and a Bill involving taxation or the spending of public money must be based on resolutions agreed by the Commons, often after debate, before it could be introduced (Central Office of Information, 1994, pp. 67-68). According to Englefield (1985), the Parliament would liaise, if needed be, with other departments and also, if appropriate, with outside specialists, interest groups, lobbies and so on, in order that possible snags had at least been reviewed. When the bills took shape, the next stage was for the civil servants responsible for policy and the legal staff of the Department to prepare instructions to enable staff of the Parliament Council acting to draft the bill. Finally, the designated committee judged its political implications and in the context how it might be handled in Parliament. After the bill was sent to the House, it was reviewed in detail in the standing committee and the whole House during the second reading. After the third reading and adding possible amendments from the House of Lords, the bill then became an Act. All laws must be approved by the Queen in Parliament. A draft law took the form of a parliamentary Bill, must go through the necessary stages in both Houses of Parliament and the Queen must signify her approval (which was a formality), all within a single session of Parliament. The Bill then became an Act and came into force on the day on which it received the Royal Assent, unless the Act provided for other dates (Central Office of Information, 1994).

Before the second reading, the Department might publish a White Paper with proposal spelt out. The White Paper not only assisted MPs to understand the background to the bill before they picked up the text for the first time but provided the interested people and groups with opportunities to express their opinions. From time to time consultation papers, sometimes called 'Green Papers' set out Government proposals which were still taking shape and sought

comments from the public (Central Office of Information, 1994). The procedure was a legal stage as well as a valuable process to revise and promote the draft policy.

### **Execution of policy**

The last stage of policy-making in the DFE was its execution. After preferred policy had been decided by the Secretary of State or had gone through the legislative process in the House of Commons, civil servants then made things actually happen. Their work included the distribution of powers and responsibilities for officials, collecting resources required, applying methods for implementing, controlling, and evaluating the policy. In terms of national ACE policy, the DFE might establish a partnership with FEFCs, HEFCs, LEAs, or relevant education institutions which would actually carry out the policy.

As emphasised before, policy-making in the DFE was so complex that it is difficult to analyse it in brief. According to Weaver (1979), these stages: analysing problems, plans and priorities; formulation of policy; determination of policy; execution of policy were quite clear and easily understood. However, this kind of classification was simplified. Fenwick and McBride (1981, p. 35) pointed out that many policies, some of major significance, which spring from *ad hoc* decisions by the Ministers, followed no obvious pattern but represented a response to immediate political pressure or current economic conditions. Student grants and teachers' salaries were likely to be subjects to such forces. Weaver also indicated that his description was somewhat abstract and idealised. He highlighted that officials in the Department did not spend most of their time on systematic policy-making, but were preoccupied with routine tasks. Nor was it likely that officials will have the 'majestic and dispassionate grasp of...responsibilities' attributed to them by Weaver (Ozga, 1986, p. 63).

Additionally, there were different kinds of policy-making in the DFE and they might have a different process. Edward Boyle, former Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Education and Minister of State, classified four layers of decision-making in government departments in response to Weaver's viewpoints (Weaver, 1979, p. 59):

- (1) Major political decisions, which usually cut across department boundaries;

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- (2) More technical policy decisions, which had political implications but which were more often settled by the civil service administrative machine;
- (3) Specific decisions arising out of MP's letters, deputations, or proceedings in Parliament (Questions, adjournment debates);
- (4) Decisions which involved simply the application of rules, circular and so on.

According to Boyle, the four layers of decision-making in government departments had different origins, importances and processes. Major political decisions were more complicated and needed to cut across departmental boundaries. For these decisions, coordination and consultation were more essential for policy-makers in the DFE. In contrast, decisions which involved simply the application of rules, circular and so forth were more simple and normally Ministers would not be involved in this level.

Dividing policy-making into concrete stages and phases is helpful for researchers to analyse this complex process. Even though Weaver's classification of policy-making in the DFE was rational and idealised and was not enough to illustrate different kinds of decisions, it provides us with a concrete framework for a general discussion on national policy-making. Partly because of the lack of other relevant literature, the researcher would apply Weaver's classification of policy-making in the DFE for further discussion below.

### **5.3 Evaluation of policy-making in the DFE**

Since the DFE had become the major policy-maker of national ACE policy, it was important to improve its role in policy-making. Is there any disadvantage of policy-making in the DFE? The OECD conducted an inquiry into the previous DFE planning machinery in 1975 and the criticisms are valuable to be cited. The OECD had three criticisms on policy-making in the previous DFE (OECD, 1975; Ozga, 1986).

**(1) The first of the OECD's criticisms was the by now well-known one that too much of the Department's planning was done in secret and was not, therefore, open enough to public gaze and scrutiny.**

The first criticism suggests that policy-making in the previous DFE need to be more open for involving people and organisations in the policy process. As the OECD(1975, p. 32) noted that

'the United Kingdom offers an example of educational planning in which the structure for ensuring public participation is limited. This has at least two consequences. One is that in certain cases policy is less likely to be understood and therefore less likely to be wholeheartedly accepted when the processes which lead up to its formulation are guarded as arcane secrets. The second is that goals and priorities, once established, may go on being taken for granted and hence escaped the regular scrutiny which may be necessary for an appropriate realignment of policy.'

Requesting more participation in policy-making is a common viewpoint of researchers (Kogan, 1987; Ozga, 1986; Weiss, 1993). For example, Kogan (1987) stressed that policy formulation is pluralist, no matter how convergent the outcomes are. He argued that policy-making should be open enough and involve diverse participation. Pluralist policy-making has a sense of democracy because in its process, relevant people have an opportunity to share powers with policy-makers via participation. The quality of policy-making may be improved through a collective discussion. Since this policy-making is through a democratic process, it would easily be widely accepted and decrease the possible obstacles of implementation. If the time is available and the intended policy needs a diverse participation and discussion, pluralist policy-making would be helpful. Weiss (1993, p. 307) also indicated that pluralism, decentralisation, deregulation, school autonomy, greater diversity and parent empowerment in education are among the new guiding principles in educational policy in numerous industrial countries. In Britain, after the 1988 ERA, school autonomy and parent empowerment have obviously increased. But, pluralism and a greater diversity need to be improved in British educational policy. That the legislation of the ERA and 1992 FHEA mostly empowered the DFE seems against the above trends of decentralisation and deregulation.

From the DFE to the Cabinet, it is helpful to utilise pluralist policy-making for meeting different demands as well. The Cabinet does not make policies within a vacuum. As Greenwood and Wilson (1984) showed that the Cabinet responds to issues, problems, and

opinions emanating from within central administration, as well as to environmental influences (economic factors, social forces, international tensions, and so forth) and a host of other extra-governmental pressures. If the Cabinet intends to ignore or just cannot consider the diverse influences, there may be some problems following. Hogwood (1991) also noted that because of the relatively closed nature of the policy process in British central government, it is possible for there to be little public debate but for the issue to be getting serious attention in private from the policy-makers. Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992, p. 7) commented that there seems little doubt that there has been a state control element in the British government's approach to policy construction and a strong desire to exclude practitioners (or their 'representatives', and the trade unions). They further indicated that in the legislation, the government's promotion of parents and the market over the claims of the 'educational lobby', and its language of 'implementation' are all attempts at continuing to exclude certain voices from the policy process. In the opinions of Hogwood (1991) and Bowe et al (1992), the DFE's exclusion of outsiders and its closed door policy process needed to be improved. A closed door tendency of policy-making in British central government is not helpful for the policy itself and is also against the world trend.

The DFE called for more decentralisation and diverse involvement in educational policy-making. According to Weaver's stages, especially during these following stages: analysing problems, plans and priorities, and policy formulation, policy-makers needed to collect information, to coordinate and to consult with other departments or outsiders. It was advantageous for policy-makers to provide opportunities for relevant people and organisations who were involved in the policy process to contribute their opinions. Although, as Pile (1979) reviewed, the DFE had indeed established various specialised Advisory Bodies such as the previous FEU to offer professional suggestions, the pluralism and diversity could be promoted, particularly when the DFE had increased its powers. In view of applying the pluralism and diversity, people and organisations might have more opportunities to participate in policy-making. For instance, in ACE, what were the demands of practitioners, adults, and employers? What were the factors affecting policy-making? In order to answer

these questions, the DFE needed to conduct open discussions, and collect empirical data via interacting with relevant people and organisations.

**(2) The second was the Department's concept of planning.**

According to the OECD (1975), the previous DFE used to see its planning function as 'identifying existing trend' and then seeking to cater for it as best it could in the future. The above concept of planning, say, reacting to events is too passive and it needs to be changed to be more positive. Planning in the OECD's view should have been much more than a mere reaction to likely trends and demands. Identifying existing trends is only the basic work and starting point for the DFE's policy-making. In order to achieve a high quality policy, the DFE would have to refer to much more research conducted on the basis of existing and future trends. Above all, the changes of society and economy are taking place so rapidly that educational policy-making may become out of date in a short time if it is unable to meet the needs of the future.

About ACE, comparatively, the DFE's policy-making seemed not to be efficient enough to meet the actual need. For example, the idea of 'family literacy' originating in the USA in the early 1980s has become an important field of adult basic education. Family literacy is focused on the influence of parents on their children's literacy learning and then is applied to design programmes for enriching parents' basic education. After researching into the practice of family literacy in the USA by ALBSU, the Education Secretary announced the initiative for developing family literacy in June 1993. The date was later than the one in the USA about ten years. Was there no family literacy problem in Britain? The answer was negative. ALBSU's research found out that 54% (N=2,617) of children whose parents had reading problems and no school qualifications were in the lowest reading score group and 72% of children whose parents had reading problems and were in the lowest income group were in the lowest reading score group (ALBSU, 1993). If the DFE were able to catch the world current, the British family literacy problems would have been focused on and resolved earlier.

In Britain, the DFE had drawn attention to establishing the partnership with private enterprises but it seemed to be less effects, compared with the following Japanese case. In Japan, in order to improve limitations of governmental departments in providing lifelong learning, a new type of developmental support system, the 'Third Sector Method' has been established since the early 1980s in which administrative bodies, in cooperation with private corporations, establish new organisations to utilise private sector vitality. For instance, the Adachi Community Culture and Sports Public Service Corporation was set up in 1983 in Adachi-Ward (Tokyo). This Corporation was established with money from Adachi-Ward and was commissioned to manage 4 institutions. By 1991, however, the number of managed institutions was expanded to 64, including libraries, social education centres, support grounds, gymnasiums, pools parks, tennis courts, and public halls. The Corporation plans and provides a wide variety of programmes within these institutions (Miura et al, 1992, p. 100). This is an effective method of providing learning opportunities for adults through enterprises' involvement, especially when the government's budgets are on the wane. But we have not found any similar projects in Britain yet. As a result, British ACE has been more marginalised due to the shortage of funding, particularly traditional liberal adult education. If the government were able to form more concrete plans to establish a partnership with private enterprises, the problem of the shortage of funding would not be so serious. Indeed, there are different situations in different countries because of the culture, and social background. However, it may be the passive concept of planning that makes the DFE only concentrate on the status quo but not sensitive enough to refer to other countries' experiences and to the future trends.

**(3) The third criticism of the Department's attitude to planning was that it was too purely educationally oriented. Here the main point was that it was not sufficiently concerned with considering educational problems in the context of their relationship to the problems which other government departments were facing.**

The criticism above signifies that policy-makers in the previous DFE needed a macro view of analysing educational problems and of seeking resolutions. The generation of educational



problems is usually regarded with various factors such as political, economic, and social factors. It is not enough merely in the dimension of education to formulate policy. Policy-makers have to analyse problems and to collect information, in a broad perspective, via different viewpoints and aspects. Generally, in Britain's history of ACE, the DFE had been able to consider noneducational factors' influences. As reviewed in chapters 2 and 3, after the 1970s, mainly because of the economic recession, the DFE had drawn more attention to economic factors.

The third criticism has a close relationship with the first one. Since policy-making in the DFE was usually in secret and lacked outsiders' participation, it tended to be developed merely in a educational dimension. This kind of closed style policy-making results in the DFE losing opportunities to consider different views from other departments and people in a broad context. Some influential factors therefore are easily ignored and generate negative effects on policy-making. For example, policies cannot meet adult learners' demands and cannot get practitioners' support.

After the evaluation of OECD in 1975, if the DFE's policy-making had been improved? By reviewing policy-making in the DES/DFE, Fletcher (1995, p. 146) pointed out that the DFE did seem to have attempted to respond to the elegant strictures of OECD examiners. It had taken a much more proactive role in relation to policy; had been willing to embrace contentious policies, and to make a virtue of the absence of consensus; had controlled the consultation process more tightly than previously. It also attempted to distate the implementation timetable in a manner that would have been unthinkable in the days of the old educational partnership. However, new influential groups such as teacher unions and parents were still not sufficiently involved in the DFE's policy-making and the diffusion of educational responsibilities across numerous government departments had not helped DFE in its attempts to control the policy-making and implementation process. Fletcher (1995) further showed that before and after the OECD investigation in the mid-1970s, elements of Rational and Incremental models were identified in both the 'partnership' and 'planning' phases. In addition the diffusion of educational responsibilities across numerous government

departments had not helped the DFE in its attempts to control the policy-making and implementation process. In consequence a new educational partnership was now a possibility. Therefore, the DFE's policy-making still had to be shared in power with new pressure groups eg employers in ACE and to be shared in responsibility with an analysis of open system into different influence resources.

System analysis discussed in chapter 4 could be applied to conquer the above disadvantages of policy-making in the DFE. By systems analysis, the DFE was able to develop policy in an open perspective, involving relevant departments and people to improve the pluralism and decentralisation according to the need of policy-making. In this way, more opinions in various respects could be collected instead of only focusing on the educational dimension. Once the diverse information and opinions were collected, the DFE could formulate policy on the basis of trends and demands to meet the needs at present as well as in future.

#### **5.4 Systems analysis of policy-making in the DFE**

Policy-making in the DFE could be analysed by the systems model in Figure 4.4 on the basis of Weaver's classification. According to Figure 4.4, policy-making could be divided into three stages. Stage 1 was the input, which included the demands from diverse sources. Stage 2 was the throughput, which signified the political system via the DFE. Stage 3 was the output, which comprised national ACE policies. Accordingly, national ACE policies were formed mainly by policy-makers in the DFE inputting varied demands and considering the influences of the environment inside and outside the DFE. So in terms of systems theory, analysing problems, plans and priorities was the input; formulation of policy was the throughput, and determination of policy and execution of policy were the output. Figure 5.1 combines policy-making in the DFE and systems theory.

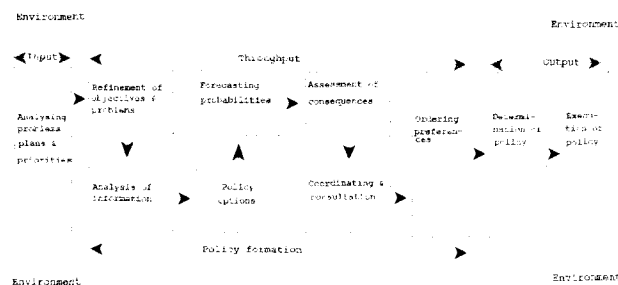


Figure 5.1: Policy-making and policy formulation  
**Figure 5.1** Systemic analysis of policy-making and policy formulation

## Input

In the input, the focus of policy-making was on analysing problems, plans and priorities to create a basis of policy formulation. Through this analysis, diverse demands were collected and screened in this stage for further policy formulation. In order to achieve the objective, policy-makers in the DFE would need to collect information to make the problems more clear, to develop plans and to decide priorities for policy formulation. Policy-makers would need to look for data in various respects and filter through the problems suffered, deleting or merging similar ones and then list the priorities based on the degree of urgency and on the objectives.

At this stage, policy-makers in the DFE would need to apply a macro view of analysing. It is helpful to make use of the process of pluralism and decentralisation. If policy-makers provide opportunities for people and organisations inside and outside the Department to participate, they could obtain a variety of information resources. Diverse resources from the context inside and outside the Department are more useful for collecting and clarifying problems than merely depending on the Department's own resources. Before formulating policy, policy-makers are required to understand varied reasons for policy-making eg demands of adults and practitioners; expectation of employers. If policy-makers are trying to increase national advanced courses in further education colleges, they have to assess whether adult learners' needs have been considered and what kinds of courses are the

priorities. It is impossible to answer these questions only in the office of the DFE. This is what Kogan emphasises that Ministers of education have to relate their decision-making to that of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Treasury, and others at the apex of the government machine (Kogan, 1971, p. 34). Policy-makers in the DFE would need the interaction with people and organisations outside to collect enough information for analysing problems, plans and priorities.

### **Throughput**

In the throughput, it was the political process via the DFE. The major work was the formulation of policy. It included seven phases: refinement of objectives and problems; analysis of information; policy options; forecasting probabilities; assessment of consequences; coordination and consultation; ordering preferences. The seven phases were achieved gradually. On the basis of analysing problems, plans, and priorities, policy-makers in the DFE refined objectives and problems as concrete and specific as possible. They collected more information to explore and to develop policy options. According to the objectives, policy-makers forecasted probabilities and assessed the consequences of each policy option. In the next phase, they coordinated and consulted relevant people and departments to confirm the acceptability and practicability, and finally ordered preferences in a list.

In the formulation of policy, it is beneficial for policy-makers in the DFE to provide opportunities for outsiders in the process and to take influential factors into account from the environment. Although there were civil servants and Advisory Bodies in the DFE, outsiders' participation might have positive effects on the realisation of the trends and demands at present and in future. In the phase of coordination and consultation, policy-makers in the DFE could interact with relevant colleagues and professional organisations. In other phases like refinement of objectives and problems, forecasting probabilities and assessment of consequences, various people's participation might be able to produce a comprehensive discussion. As the team leader of further education for adults in the Further Education Branch, Mr Kirwan, mentioned, when Ministers making decisions, they usually invited

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relevant people in the policy discussion, for example, Directors of the NIACE and ALBSU. Therefore, how to include people and organisations associated with policy according to its traits, time, and costs available would be an important task of policy-makers in the DFE.

#### **Output**

In the output, national ACE policies were made and implemented. There were two phases: determination of policy, and execution of policy. Although to determine policy was mostly the responsibility of the Secretary of State, it was helpful for him/her to consult with other people or organisations again such as Ministers, senior civil servants, Advisory Bodies or NIACE and so on. If the Secretary of State could understand the priority of policy in accordance with the actual needs and the environment's influences, the most necessary and high standard policy could be decided upon. After the determination of policy, it was the main duty of civil servants to cooperate with relevant statutory or voluntary sectors to execute the policy. If policy-makers evaluated the effectiveness of policy implementation and formed feedback to amend the previous stages, policy-making could be improved gradually.

Policy-making in the DFE can become clearer and better via systems analysis. In terms of systems theory, seven phases of policy-making in the DFE can be divided into three stages ie input, throughput, and output. The combination indicates that policy-making in the DFE includes a series of activities one by one. Systems analysis is particularly helpful for analysing problems, plans and priorities and policy formulation. By opening door to involve more relevant outsiders in the policy process according to policy traits, policy-makers are able to collect more useful information to develop the policy in a broad perspective not only restricted to education, and are able to be sensitive to the trends in this country and in the world. In this way, the three drawbacks the OECD raised could be avoided gradually. After the DFE had increased its powers, systems theory also increased its possible contribution to analysing British national ACE policy-making.

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As mentioned previously, basically, policy-making in British government has a process of pluralism. The pluralist style is reflected in different respects such as the partnership, committee, advisory body, lobby and so on. This sort of policy-making can be seen as decentralisation. As Hall et al put it, British policy process is not contained within a single centrally-coordinated system. It embraces a number of sub-systems such as Parliament, Pressure groups, the political parties, and other bodies like research institutions (Hall et al, 1975). In Hogwood's terms, British policy-making is formulated in the 'policy communities' which consist not simply of civil servants and ministers but of relevant 'recognised' interest groups and of other government bodies, both appointed and elected local authorities (Hogwood, 1991). Hogwood further points out that since the Second World War, the British government has always had a highly ramified system of standing cabinet committees, subcommittees, and *ad hoc* committees, though the bulk of government decisions are made in individual departments or through interdepartmental negotiations outside the cabinet structure (Hogwood, 1991, p. 101). No matter which kind of method is applied, policy-making in British government is created through pluralist interaction. However, we have found that educational policy-making is getting far away from this style. Partly because the degree of open participation is not enough and partly because the power has been increased, the DFE still has much space to provide much more participation to outsiders in ACE policy-making.

### **Summary**

The DFE had become the prime policy-maker of national ACE policy in England and Wales, especially after the 1988 ERA. Policy-making in the DFE had been discussed and evaluated according to Weaver's classification (Weaver, 1979) and the OECD's criticisms (OECD, 1975). The DFE would need to improve the process of pluralism and decentralisation by offering open participation for outsiders in policy-making more positively, making use of a macro view to advance the policy quality and to catch the domestic and international trends. The requirements above have got more significant since the DFE increased its powers. In this situation, systems theory could be employed by policy-makers mainly in the DFE to achieve the above objectives. In terms of systems theory, stages of policy-making in the DFE could

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be divided into the input, throughput, and output. Policy-makers in the DFE could apply systems analysis, involving relevant outsiders in policy process, and taking influential factors in the environment into account to formulate high quality policies. In national ACE policy-making, systems analysis would be particularly able to contribute to analysing problems, plans, priorities, demands, influential factors, and to formulating policy.

## **Part 2**

### **CONDUCTING: INTO THE REAL WORLD**

This Part discusses how this research has been conducted. It covers the methodology, data collections and analyses of collected data. Approaches of data collections and data analyses will be presented. The major aim of this Part is to reach into the real world of national ACE policy-making in England and Wales via multiple empirical ways.

Part 2 has two chapters:

Chapter 6 Research design;

Chapter 7 Analysis of empirical data.



## **Chapter 6**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The application of methodology is based on the research's purposes. The topic of this research is national ACE policy-making in England and Wales and its focus has been on exploring influential factors and public demands. Since ACE here has been in change, the researcher has sought to link the dimensions of theory and practice, especially to get into the real world of ACE via contacting ACE institutions, practitioners, and policy-makers. Because ACE has a character of diversity, therefore, the researcher has included a variety of relevant people in the sample. Accordingly, the research methods used in this research comprise the quantitative methods like questionnaire surveys followed by statistical analyses, and qualitative methods, ie, interviews with content analyses. It can be seen as an empirical-oriented study. The major principle is to link the theoretical and empirical dimensions closely.

This chapter discusses how this research was conducted, how data were collected, and how collected data were analysed according to research purposes and the cited theoretical framework. Research design denotes the methodology of this research.

This chapter includes seven sections:

- 6.1 Analytical framework;
- 6.2 Research questions and hypotheses;
- 6.3 Methods of data collection;
- 6.4 Sampling and the sample;
- 6.5 Instruments for data collection;
- 6.6 Implementing procedure;
- 6.7 Data processing.

## 6.1 Analytical framework

In character, this research is an empirical study. The researcher reviewed the relevant literature to inspect key problems of national ACE policy-making in England and Wales and then applied systems theory as the theoretical framework and as the basis of empirical data collection. Empirical data collection was mostly conducted through two-stage interviews and questionnaire surveys. Policy study which merely focuses on the theoretical discussion is not adequate. It should be able to reflect the practice of policy. Empirical data are helpful in making clear the practice of policy through showing what happened in the real world. As Michael (1983) stressed, a policy consists of a series of actions and decisions. Empirical data collection in this research aimed to gather information about the actions and decisions that a policy comprises. The conducted process of this research is illustrated below.

Figure 6.1 shows the conducted procedure of this research.

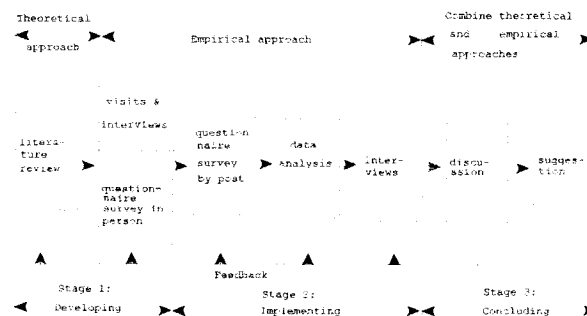


Figure 6.1 The conducted procedure of this research.

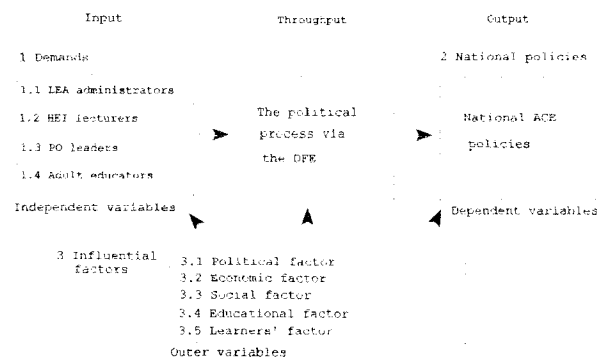
As Figure 6.1 lists, this research was carried out, via combined theoretical and empirical approaches in three stages: developing, implementing, and concluding. At stage 1, the researcher pursued a literature review, visits, interviews, and the questionnaire survey in person in order to develop the theoretical framework and the empirical study. At stage two, the questionnaire survey by post was conducted to collect empirical data and, after the data analysis, interviews were implemented to examine and to enrich the findings. At stage three, the conclusion was put down after the discussion and suggestions were written. At stage

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three, the researcher evaluated the previous steps at each stage, using the discussion sources as feedback to amend the theoretical and empirical approaches, and then made suggestions.

Following the above conducted procedure of this research, the researcher developed an analytical framework. An analytical framework is a structure used to indicate the analysed variables, hypothesised relations between variables, and the direction of their relations. It is usually illustrated through a diagram.

Figure 6.2 is the analytical framework of this research, based on the research purposes and systems theory.



**Note.** *HEI*: Higher Education Institution

*PO*: Professional Organisation

**Figure 6.2** The analytical framework of this research.

As Figure 6.2 shows, in the three stages-input, throughout, and output-three types of variables were analysed for this research. In the middle stage, the political process of policy-making, via the DFE was examined. Although there were no direct empirical analysed variables, the researcher discussed this process in chapter 5, combined with the interviews in stage 2. The basic hypothesis of these variables was that national ACE policies were made by policy-makers in the DFE who might be influenced by four groups of relevant public demands, and by five kinds of inter and outer environmental factors. The research was intended to explore the different demands of four groups of people, to confirm the five

groups of factors and to understand national ACE policies. The relationships between demands, influential factors and national ACE policies would be discussed as well.

### **Three variables**

#### ***Independent variables***

At the input stage, the variables were demands expressed by four relevant groups, say, LEA administrators, higher education institution lecturers, professional organisation leaders, and adult educators. The opinions, suggestions and expectations of these four groups in relation to the research and practice of ACE, are meant to reflect the diverse demands of various institutions and persons. The involvement of different relevant people in the process meant that policy-making had to meet varying demands. It also represents a sense of pluralism; namely, relevant people had an opportunity to express their opinions about policy-making. In statistical terms, demands at the input stage were the independent variables.

#### ***Dependent variable***

At the output stage, the single variable was current national ACE policies. National ACE policies included policies that have been formed and proposed, and those proposals would demand attention in future. How one may classify the national ACE policies was one of the research questions. In statistical terms, national ACE policies were the dependent variable.

#### ***Outer variables***

Environmental variables in this research designated by the factors inside and outside the DFE which may affect demands and national ACE policies. These factors were to be categorised by Confirmatory Factor Analysis to test the factor structure. The hypothesised five factor groups were political, economic, social, educational, and learners' factors. Each group comprised several factors. To isolate these factors was one of the main purposes of this research.

### **Hypothesised relations**

The arrow lines in Figure 6.2 symbolise the relationships and flow of influential direction between the different variables. There were a number of varying hypothesised relations between variables.

- (1) The relationship between independent and dependent variables.

The demands of various people can be reflected in the ranking according to their importance of national ACE policies. The various demands of people of different background made on national ACE policies is an interesting question. After answering the above question, policy-makers will be able to formulate policy while considering the specific demands of relevant people.

- (2) The relationship between independent and outer variables.

The demands expressed by different people might be influenced by environmental variables. It is usually safe to predict that when different people disclose their demands on national ACE policy-making, they will consider their impact on the environment, for example, adult learner's needs and economic condition. The nature of various people's different opinions about influential factors affecting national ACE policy-making was one of the analysed topics of this research. The possible differences should not only reveal their distinct perception of environmental factors but show the different problems they have suffered.

- (3) The relationship between outer and dependent variables

The national ACE policies ranked by different people may reflect the influence of environmental variables. It is quite possible that different people will choose to express their ranking of national ACE policies, considering the impact of diverse environmental factors. How varying environmental factors have influenced national ACE policies and whether the different influences can be ranked were both analysed topics in this research.

## **6.2 Research questions and hypotheses**

Below are listed the various research questions and the conclusions drawn from the questions, ie, hypotheses in accordance with the research purposes, analytical framework, and hypothesised relations between variables.

### **Research questions**

#### ***Outer and dependant variables***

Three specific questions about the outer and dependent variables were:

- (1) Whether there are indeed five groups of factors affecting national ACE policy-making, ie, political, economic, social, educational, and learners' factors.
- (2) Whether different national ACE policies can be classified according to varied patterns.
- (3) Whether the factors influencing national ACE policies can be ranked. Which factor is the most influential one?

#### ***Independent and dependant variables***

The following questions would be answered. Whether different subsamples have different opinions about the importance of different national ACE policies. Whether the differences can be explored through personal background, ie, gender, age, occupation, and place of residence? The specific questions are paraphrased as follows:

- (1) Whether males and females rank differently specific national ACE policies.
- (2) Whether people of different ages rank differently specific national ACE policies.
- (3) Whether people of different occupations rank differently specific national ACE policies.
- (4) Whether people with different places of residence rank differently specific national ACE policies.

#### ***Independent and outer variables***

Whether different subsamples have different opinions about the importance of factors affecting national ACE policy-making. The specific questions paraphrased were:

- (1) Whether males and females rank differently factors affecting national ACE policy-making.
- (2) Whether people of different ages rank differently factors affecting national ACE policy-making.

(3) Whether people of different occupations rank differently factors affecting national ACE policy-making.

(4) Whether people with different places of residence rank differently factors affecting national ACE policy-making.

The research hypotheses were the proposed answers to the above questions. They need to be further tested according to data analyses.

### **Research hypotheses**

From the above research problems, the researcher raised the following five hypotheses:

1. Factors affecting national ACE policy-making can be classified into five groups.
2. National ACE policies can be grouped.
3. Different factors have different interpretations of national ACE policies.
4. Different people rank national ACE policies differently.
5. Different people rank factors affecting national ACE policy-making differently.

## **6.3 Methods of data collection**

In order to collect empirical data, the researcher utilised different methods over two stages.

### **Stage 1**

At stage 1, the principal aim was to enable the researcher to understand the practices of ACE in England and Wales by directly contacting practitioners and institutions. The researcher employed visits and interviews to achieve this aim.

#### ***Visits***

Visiting is a most helpful method of direct contact. The researcher visited certain ACE institutions which were selected randomly, in England and Wales. Via these visits, the researcher had opportunities to understand the facilities of the institutions such as their classrooms, libraries, and so forth, and to sit in certain classes. The researcher also obtained the prospectuses of these institutions and inspected their course offerings.

***Interviews***

The interviews offered opportunities for the researcher to interact with practitioners of ACE institutions. In addition to visiting institutions, the researcher interviewed relevant practitioners responsible for policy implementation in institutions. The researcher made use of prepared questions for discussion with interviewees and took notes.

***Questionnaire survey in person***

The questionnaire survey in person was utilised for broader information than that obtained from the interviews. The questionnaires, which were designed on the basis of the literature review, research purposes and the findings of the visits and interviews, were distributed to the sample by the researcher in person. The sample was asked to return questionnaires in person or by post in a short time.

**Stage 2**

Stage 2 was a key part of the empirical data collection in this research. It aimed to gather more data from a larger sample according to the findings of stage 1. The methods applied at stage 2 are described below.

***Questionnaire survey by post***

The postal questionnaire survey is seen as an economic method of getting abundant data from spread over large and diverse areas. The purpose of the postal questionnaire survey was to collect broad empirical data from a wide diversity of people and sectors. In this research, questionnaires were sent to the sample and returned before the deadline.

***Interviews***

Unlike the interviews of stage 1, the interviews of stage 2 concentrated on the research questions and specific findings of the postal questionnaire survey. The purposes of the interviews of stage 2 were to obtain further information and examine the findings of the postal questionnaire survey and to further analyse problems in detail. The researcher



interviewed people who had a close involvement in or were familiar with national ACE policy-making.

## **6.4 Sampling and the sample**

The sample was the institutions and individuals who provided information for this research. Sampling refers to how the sample is selected. There were different sampling methods and subsamples at stages 1 and 2.

### **Sampling**

The sampling methods in this research included Stratified Random Sampling and Intended Sampling on the basis of the different purposes.

#### ***Stratified Random Sampling***

This kind of sampling refers to selecting the sample according to the stratification of the sample for the purpose of balance in different areas and institutions. It was the main sampling method for this research. Three kinds of stratified random sampling subsamples were selected.

##### **(1) The sample for the visits and interviews of stage 1**

The researcher selected the sample from the lists presented in the 1992-93 and 1993-94 Yearbooks published by the NIACE, after considering the balance in different areas and institutions. In total, there were 10 institutions sampled, of which agreed to be visited and interviewed. Thus, the response rate was 70%.

##### **(2) The sample for the questionnaire survey in person at stage 1.**

The sample of the questionnaire survey in person was randomly selected at three different national conferences sponsored by the NIACE. The researcher chose the sample partly at the suggestion of the conference organiser and in total distributed 21 questionnaires, of which 14 questionnaires were returned. Thus, the response rate was 66.67%.

##### **(3) The sample for the questionnaire survey by post at stage 2**

The researcher sampled LEA administrators, higher education institution lecturers, professional organisation leaders, and principals or directors of further education colleges,

residential colleges, and colleges of ECA, after referring to the 1993-94 Yearbook published by the NIACE. Adult educators were selected with the assistance of the sampled principals and directors of colleges.

### ***Intended Sampling***

Intended sampling means that the sample is selected in accordance with a researcher's purpose, as opposed to random sampling. The sample for interviews at stage 2 was gained in this way. The researcher directly selected thirteen subsamples from the DFE, HMI, FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE, ALBSU, and the Extra-Mural Studies Centre at Birkbeck College, King's College, Surrey University and Warwick University.

### **The sample**

There were different subsamples at different stages.

### ***Stage 1***

The total sample at stage 1 was smaller than the one at stage 2. Varied methods had varied subsamples.

#### **Visits and interviews**

The sample for visits and interviews was ACE institutions and practitioners. The researcher chose the institutions first and then selected the interviewees to meet. Accordingly, the subsamples were the Governor's Training Coordinator at the City Lit, Director of Community Access at Kingsway Camden's College; Director of Studies, Department of General Education at Cardiff Tertiary College; Director of Community Education Lewisham; Principal and Chief Executive of Hampstead Garden Suburb, Community Education Organiser of Charles Keene College; and Senior Manager of Askham Bryan College. The number of the sample was 7, one in Wales and six in England. The brief interview record is presented in Appendix A and a summary of the sample data is provided in Table 6.1.

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**Table 6.1** The sample for visits and interviews at stage 1.

Place	Institution	Interviewee	No	Total
<b>England</b>				
London	The City Lit	Governor's Training Coordinator	1	7
	Kingsway Camden's College	Director of Community Access	1	
	Community Education Lewisham	Director	1	
	Hampstead Garden Suburb	Principal and Chief Executive	1	
	Leicester	Charlee Keene College	Community Education Organiser	
York	Askham Bryan College	Senior Manager	1	
<b>Wales</b>				
Cardiff	Cardiff Tertiary College	Director of Studies, Department of General Education	1	

### Questionnaire survey in person

The sample for the questionnaire survey in person at stage 1 was the attendants of the 1993 Adult Learners' Week conferences sponsored by the NIACE. The total number of the sample was 14. The analysis of the sample is listed in Table 6.2.

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**Table 6.2** The sample for the questionnaire survey in person at stage 1.

	Item	No	Total
Gender	M	9	
	F	6	
Age	18-24	0	
	25-34	1	
	35-44	1	
	45-54	10	
	55-64	2	
	65+	0	
Occupation	Administrator in government department or institution of ACE	8	14
	Tutor in university	1	
	Official of professional organisation	0	
	Adult educator in institution of ACE	5	
	Adult learner	0	
	Other	0	
Working place	London	2	
	Other areas in England	11	
	Wales	1	

### Stage 2

The total sample at stage 2 was larger and consisted of more diverse people than the one at stage 1. Distinct methods called for distinct subsamples.

#### Questionnaire survey by post

The sample for the postal questionnaire survey included five kinds of people. Specifically, they were administrators responsible for ACE policy at LEAs, lecturers teaching ACE subjects in universities and colleges, leaders of professional organisations involved in ACE, including statutory and voluntary ones, and adult educators in further education colleges, residential colleges including long-term and short-term ones, and colleges of the ECA. Since this research concerns national ACE policy-making, people who may not have been familiar with this topic were not included such as adult learners, and because the name lists were based on the annual Yearbook of the NIACE, relevant groups whose names and addresses were not available in the Yearbook were excluded such as trade unions. Nonetheless, these

relevant people and groups might have been contacted via visits, interviews or informal talks at stages 1 and 2.

A background of the sample is presented in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3** The sample for the postal questionnaire survey at stage 2.

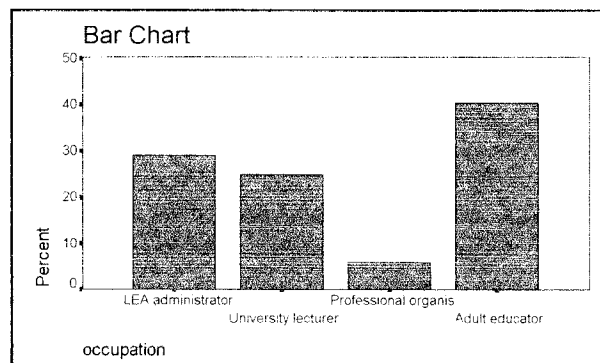
Subsample	Selected number	Percentage	Total	Returned number	Percentage	Total
LEA administrators	58	17.74	327	36	29.00	124
HEI lecturers	56	17.13		31	25.00	
PO leader	13	3.98		7	5.60	
Adult educator	200	61.16		50	40.30	

**Note.** HEI: Higher Education Institution  
PO: Professional Organisation

The major rationale of the sampling was to achieve an equilibrium of the ratios which indicated the size of four groups of subsamples with respect to their populations. The other consideration was an equilibrium of distribution of each group of subsamples throughout England and Wales. The sample selected in Table 6.3 was based on the lists of institutions in the NIACE's 1993-94 Yearbook. According to the Yearbook, there are 117 LEAs, located in counties, metropolitan districts and the London area of England and Wales. 58 educational administrators in charge of ACE in the LEAs were sampled. The ratio was 49.57% (58/117). There are 113 higher education institutions which provide ACE courses listed in the Yearbook. 56 lecturers responsible for ACE were selected. The ratio was 49.56% (56/113). There are 26 professional organisations listed in the yearbook and 13 were sampled. The ratio was 50.00% (13/26). The principals or directors of sampled colleges were commissioned to select the adult educators. Each principal or director distributed 5 questionnaires to his/her colleagues, who taught various subjects at his/her respective college. The researcher directly sampled the colleges and their principals or directors. There are 359 further education colleges in the Yearbook. 24 colleges were selected. The ratio was 6.69% (24/359). There are 110 colleges of the Educational Centres Association listed. 13 colleges were sampled. The ratio was 11.82% (13/110). There are 44 residential colleges in the Yearbook. 3 colleges were chosen. The ratio was 6.82% (3/44). In total, there were 40

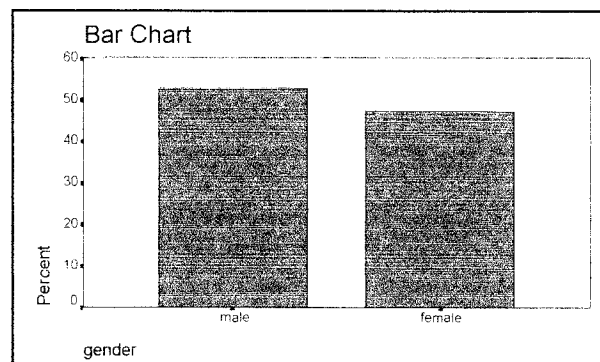
varying colleges sampled. The whole ratio was .78% (40/513). The number of adult educators would come to 200 (40\*5).

The selected sample numbers were different from those of the returned questionnaires. The specific numbers and percentages are also shown in Table 6.3. The response rates were different among the subsamples. For LEA administrators, the rate was 62.07% (36/58). For higher education institution lecturers, the rate was 55.36% (31/56). For professional organisation leaders, the rate was 53.85% (7/13). For adult educators, the rate was 25.00% (50/200). In terms of colleges where adult educators were selected, there were 40 colleges sampled, of which 20 responded. The rate was 50.00% (20/40). Each college was sent 5 questionnaires to answer. However, the returned number of questionnaires from each college was usually less than 5. So the total number of adult educators who returned the questionnaires was 100 (5\*20). In total, the response rate of the sample was 37.92% (124/327). Except for the disappointing response rate of the adult educators, the other three were quite satisfactory, ie, all over 50.00%. The reason why the response rate of the adult educators was low could be that those questionnaires were distributed by their directors or principals rather than themselves. This indirect distribution of questionnaires could have caused the low response rate. However, since the individual adult educator's address and name were not available, to pass him or her the questionnaire through their directors or principals was the most efficient way. As chapter 7 will show, another reason for the low response rate might be that a misunderstanding of the instructions for the second part of the questionnaire might have prevented some of the sample from answering. Thus, they did not send back the questionnaire. Since the whole response rate was not high, generalisation must be made with caution, especially for the subsample of adult educators. The percentages of each actual subsample are listed in figure 6.3.



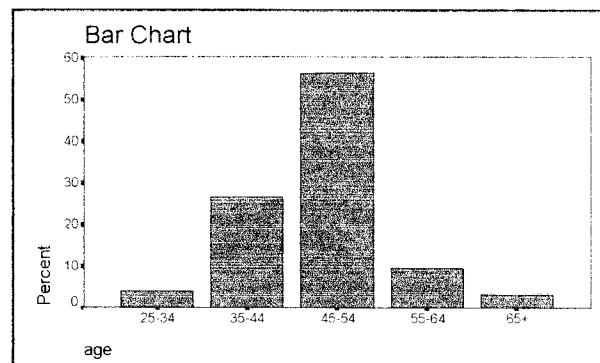
**Figure 6.3** The percentages of subsamples for the postal questionnaire survey.

As to gender, there were 65 males and 58 females identified among the respondents. One of the samples did not solicit for gender, so the total number was 123. The ratio of males to females was quite close, thus, 54% and 46%. Figure 6.4 shows percentages of the genders.



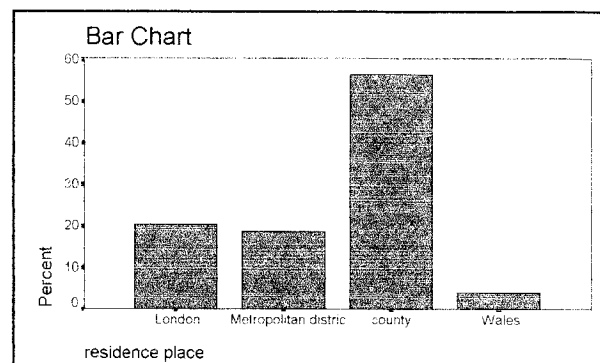
**Figure 6.4.** The percentages of the sample's gender for the postal questionnaire survey.

As to the age of the sample, there were six ranges from 18 to 65+. To the first range, 18-24, no sample belonged with, the percentage of the sample aged 45-54 as the highest, ie, 56.50% (N=70). The varied percentages of each age range are presented in figure 6.5.



**Figure 6.5** The percentages of the sample's ages for the postal questionnaire survey.

A different proportion of subsamples were obtained from different districts. There were four alternatives in the questionnaire: London, Metropolitan district, county, and Wales. Subsamples from the English counties occupied the largest ratio, ie, 56.60% (N=69). Comparatively, the subsamples from Wales were the lowest, ie, 4.00% (N=5). The percentages of each district are listed in Figure 6.6.



**Figure 6.6** The percentages of the sample's places of residence for the postal questionnaire survey.

In terms of the roles the sample played, and the subjects adult educators taught in their institutions, the roles included coordinators, directors, heads of department, managers, officials, personnel, and researchers. The subjects adult educators taught included art, basic



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skills, ESOL, classics, computer, business, crafts, culture, foreign languages, history, literature, literacy, management, music, philosophy, politics, social policy, and sociology. This shows the roles and subjects were rather diverse.

### **Interviews**

The seven kinds of subsamples for interviews at stage 2 included the senior officials of the DFE, HMI, FEU, FEFCs, HEFCs, NIACE, ALBSU, and the Extra-Mural Studies Centre at Birkbeck College, King's College, Surrey University and Warwick University. They were closely relevant to ACE directly or indirectly. The interviews were intended to supplement the information resources of the questionnaire survey and to further its findings so people who had been selected for the questionnaire survey and had a less than close relationship with national ACE policy-making were not included such as LEA administrators and adult educators. The analysis of the sample is presented in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4** The sample for the interviews at stage 2.

Department	Interviewee	No	Total
DFE	Team leader of further education for adults	1	
DFE	Head of Choice and Performance Division	1	
HMI	Head of Post Compulsory Education	1	
FEU	Development officer	1	
FEFC	Education programmer	1	
FEFC	Administrative coordinator	1	
HEFC	Administrator	1	13
NIACE	Director	1	
ALBSU	Director	1	
Birkbeck College	Administrator	1	
King's College	Professor	1	
Surrey University	Professor	1	
Warwick University	Professor	1	

## **6.5 Instruments for data collection**

The instruments applied to collect data for this research were all developed by the researcher. Different methods used different instruments.

### **Interview forms**

The interview forms used at stages 1 and 2 contained several questions regarding the research problems. The researcher utilised two different forms at stages 1 and 2.

***Stage 1***

The interview form was organised around the following questions:

- (1) Would you please briefly introduce your institution?
- (2) What problem does your institution suffer from at present?
- (3) What is the relationship between your institution and the LEA or FEFC?
- (4) In your opinion, when policy-makers of the DFE formulate national adult continuing education policy, what factors do they consider?
- (5) In your opinion, what adult continuing education policy do England and Wales need at present or in the future?

The above questions were prepared for interviews; however, during the interviewing, the researcher felt free to modify his questions according to the flow of his interaction with the interviewees.

***Stage 2***

The interview form was designed on the basis of the findings of the postal questionnaire survey. It included the questions below:

- (1) Would you please introduce the role your institution plays in the DFE's ACE policy-making?
- (2) In your opinion, what factors have affected the DFE's ACE policy-making?
- (3) In your opinion, what is the priority of the DFE's ACE policy agenda?
- (4) In your view, what should be the priority of the DFE's ACE policy agenda?
- (5) What is your comment on the influential factors isolated by this research?
- (6) What is your comment on the national ACE policies discussed in this research?
- (7) What is your comment on the difference among various people's ranking of these influential factors?
- (8) What is your comment on the differences among various people's ranking of the four policy patterns?

The researcher felt free to revise certain questions above when face to face with different interviewees to promote successful interaction and data collection.

### **Questionnaires**

There were two questionnaires employed in this research. One was for the survey in person at stage 1, and the other for the postal survey at stage 2.

#### ***The questionnaire for the survey in person***

The questionnaire was intended to collect general information associated with the research problems and to use as a basis for the development of the questionnaire at stage 2. Therefore, it was short and simple. The content of the questionnaire was broken into two parts:

(1) Alternative questions: included personal information ie gender, age, place of work, and one question each about the prime policy-makers in ACE and the ranking of issues.

(2) Open questions: included factors affecting ACE policy-making and the conditions necessary for ideal policy-making.

The questionnaire is listed in Appendix B.

#### ***The questionnaire for the survey by post***

Besides the soliciting of personal information, there were two kinds of questionnaires used at stage 2. One was for collecting data about factors affecting national ACE policy-making and the other about national ACE policies.

Before the formal postal survey, the researcher did a pilot study to amend the two draft questionnaires. Draft questionnaires were sent to four kinds of potential subsamples selected from the list of NIACE's 1994 Yearbook. The numbers of subsamples and questionnaires sent out and returned are shown in Table 6.5.

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**Table 6.5** The sample for the pilot study of the postal questionnaires.

Subsample	Selected number	Percentage	Total	Returned number	Percentage	Total
LEA administrators	2	20.00%	10	1	20.00	5 (50%)
HEI lecturers	2	20.00%		2	40.00	
PO leader	1	10.00%		0	0.00	
Adult educator	5	50.00%		2	40.00%	

**Note.** HEI: Higher Education Institution  
PO: Professional Organisation

As Table 6.5, 10 potential subsamples-serving as LEA administrators, higher education institution lecturers, professional organisation leaders, or adult educators-were selected. In total, 5 subsamples returned the draft questionnaires. The response rate was 50%. The selected sample was asked to gave their opinions in detail, focusing on the words used, descriptions, meanings, and the key point of each item, and to supplement these with their viewpoints on the general topics of the questionnaires. The researcher then revised the draft questionnaires, taking into account the sample's responses and viewpoints, to design the two formal questionnaires.

### (1) The questionnaire designed to rank influential factors

The questionnaire was developed based on the research purposes, the literature review, and the findings of stage 1. The researcher designed the questionnaire himself first and then revised it after discussion with two supervisors.

The questionnaire was organised item by item. Totally it was made up of 25 items. There were 5 alternatives after the statement of each item. The alternatives were ranked from 1 to 5, ie, from not at all important to extremely important, to capture a wide range of the sample's opinions; the larger the number, the more importance the sample considered it. Each sample was asked to tick one alternative for each item. There were two open questions. One provided the sample with an opportunity to list the ten most important items, in order of importance from 1 to 10 chosen from the total 25 items. The other was for the sample to express his/her own ideas about influential factors which were possibly excluded by the researcher.

The questionnaire used for ranking influential factors is shown in Appendix C.

(2) The questionnaire designed for ranking current national ACE policies

The questionnaire was organised in accordance with the research purposes, the literature review, and the findings at stage 1. The researcher designed the questionnaire first and then discussed it with two supervisors.

The questionnaire was designed item by item. It had 20 items in total. Each item had five alternatives ranked from 1 to 5, ie, from not at all important to extremely important. Each sample was asked to tick one alternative for each item according to his/her opinion. There were two open questions for the sample to list the ten most important national ACE policies from the total of 20 items and to add their individually desired national ACE policies.

The questionnaire used for ranking national ACE policies is listed in the second part of Appendix C.

## **6.6 Implementing procedure**

The implementing procedure discusses how the research was carried out in two parts: the literature review and the empirical data collection.

### **The literature review**

The literature was mostly reviewed from October 1992 to June 1998. The researcher used libraries, cooperation between libraries, and computer data bases such as ERIC ( Education Resource Index Clearinghouse) to search for the relevant literature from books and papers in order to develop the research and to form the theoretical foundation.

### **Empirical data collection**

Empirical data collection including stages 1 and 2 was conducted from December 1992 to August 1995. The different stages used different implementing procedures.

*Stage 1:* Varying methods used varying implementing procedures.

(1) Visits and interviews

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Visits and interviews were conducted from December 1992 to June 1993. After the sampling, the researcher phoned interviewees to confirm the interviews and made appointments. During the interviewing, the researcher recorded the interaction on paper and by audio cassette. After the discussion, the researcher looked over the institution, guided by the interviewee.

### *(2) Questionnaire survey in person*

The questionnaire surveys in person were carried out during 10-16 May 1993 at the NIACE's series of conferences in London and Birmingham. Before each survey, the researcher asked the conference organiser for permission. At each conference, the researcher contacted the conference organiser first and then the organiser introduced to him certain attendants who were interested in answering the questionnaires. Additionally, the researcher distributed questionnaires to attendants directly. The questionnaires were given to the sample during the break or at lunch time. When those making up the sample had finished their questionnaires, they directly returned them to the researcher or by post shortly thereafter.

**Stage 2:** At stage 2, the questionnaire survey by post and the interviews used different implementing procedures.

### *(1) Postal questionnaire survey*

The postal questionnaire survey was carried out from January 1994 to April 1994. The researcher posted questionnaires to each sample with letters written by the researcher and his supervisors to explain the purpose of the survey, how to complete the questionnaires, and the due date before which it had been sent back. In each packet, there were letters, questionnaires and a stamped envelope for its return. Questionnaires were directly sent to those comprising the sample, whether LEA administrators, higher education institution lecturers, or professional organisation leaders. As to adult educators, the questionnaires were distributed by their principals or directors at selected colleges. Each envelope enclosed for return was numbered to confirm which among the sample had sent back their questionnaire. Before the deadline, the researcher posted a postcard to remind those of the sample who had not sent back their questionnaires. After the deadline, the researcher phoned those of the sample who still had not made any response, to ask for assistance.

(2) Interviews

Interviews were completed from May 1994 to August 1995. After the sampling, the researcher sent letters to the sample or phoned each them with the supervisors' help to ask for permission. If the sample agreed to be interviewed, the researcher made an appointment with him/her and then, for some samples, sent a brief summary of the findings of his research to the interviewees for reference before visiting.

## **6.7 Data processing**

Data processing explains how collected empirical data were dealt with. Different types of data collection used different processing methods.

### **Interviews**

The data collected via interviews at stages 1 and 2 were arranged according to the questions. In addition to the records as found in Appendices A and E, the researcher applied the results obtained at stage 1 to develop the questionnaires of stage 2 and utilised the results those of stage 2 for discussion and as a basis for suggestions.

### **Questionnaires**

After the uncompleted or useless returned questionnaires had been excluded, the researcher employed different methods to process the remaining data of stages 1 and 2.

#### ***Questionnaire survey in person***

The collected data were dealt with based on the types of question. Alternative questions were represented by simple percentages. Open questions were discussed comprehensively. The researcher also made full use of the findings of the open questions for his discussion and suggestions.

***Questionnaire survey by post***

The collected data were analysed in accordance with the research questions and hypotheses by using varied statistical methods. The SPSSX Computer Statistics Package Software was applied to analyse the empirical data. The statistical methods applied were as follows:

(1) Frequency: to analyse the sample's personal information and each item in each questionnaire.

(2) Pearson Product Correlation: to obtain the simple relationships between variables.

(3) Factor Analysis: to confirm the influential factors and to classify national ACE policies.

(4) Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA): to explore the difference of opinion among the various subsamples about influential factors and national ACE policies, possibly followed by the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and a T test comparing the differences between the groups.

(5) Multiple Stepwise Regression: to compare the interpretation of current national ACE policies among different influential factors.

The criteria of statistical significance were at the .05, .01 and .001 levels.

**Summary**

This chapter has discussed the methodology employed in this research. This research was an empirical study basically. According to the research purposes and the literature review, the researcher developed varying instruments and carried out diverse visits, interviews and questionnaire surveys in person and by post in two stages to collect data. The first stage was the basic field work to form the foundation of the second stage, which was the key data collection section of this research. The data collected were dealt with according to their nature and the research purposes through discussion or statistical analyses.



## **Chapter 7**

### **ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA**

The empirical data collected through the postal questionnaire survey and interviews at stage 2 are analysed in this chapter. The postal questionnaire survey was used to collect data covering a wide scope of subjects and areas. Interviews at stage 2 were intended to collect data regarding research questions and the main findings of the postal questionnaire survey. In this research, data collected via the postal questionnaire survey and interviews were the main resources for entering the real world of ACE. The researcher utilised statistical methods and general discussion to carry out these analyses.

This chapter includes the following six sections:

- 7.1 Description of data;
- 7.2 Policy-makers in national ACE policy-making;
- 7.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making;
- 7.4 National ACE policies;
- 7.5 Comparison of the different samples' rankings;
- 7.6 Comparison of the factors' interpretation of national ACE policies.

#### **7.1 Description of data**

The empirical data collected are described before further analyses. Data collected about influential factors and national ACE policies via the questionnaire survey are evaluated by the distribution of variances, which are able to show a general trend in the sample's responses. The distribution is calculated according to the frequency of each item the sample responded to. The distribution of responses to the items on influential factors and national ACE policies are separately discussed with charts and relevant statistics as follows. Interview materials will be described in conjunction with the responses and the framework the researcher used to analyse the data.

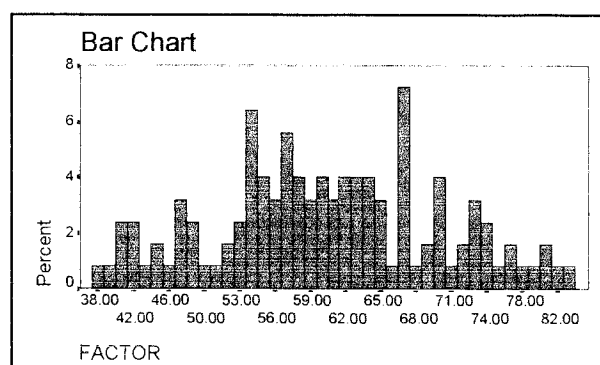
## Description of data of the questionnaire survey

### *Influential factors*

Table 7. 1 and Figure 7.1 are measurements of the responses by which the sample ranked on factors affecting national ACE policy-making. According to the different indicators of statistics in Table 7.1, the sample's rankings for the whole questionnaire show a tendency toward diversity. This means that different samples did have different responses to the items of the questionnaire. Their responses are far from identical and are meaningful enough to be compared further. Figure 7.1 presents the response distribution more clearly.

**Table 7.1** Distribution of the sample's responses to influential factors.

Mean	60.347	Std err	.902	Std dev	10.045
Variance	100.911	Kurtosis	-.302	S E Kurt	.431
Skewness	.005	S E Skew	.217	Range	46.000
Minimum	38.000	Maximum	84.000	Sum	7483.000
Percentile	Value	Percentile	Value	Percentile	Value
25.00	54.000	50.00	60.000	75.00	67.000
Valid cases	124	Missing cases	16		



**Figure 7.1** Distribution of the sample's responses to influential factors.

### ***National ACE policies***

The sample's responses to the questionnaire on ranking current national ACE policies are described by the same types of measurements. Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2 indicate the sample's responses to the items on national ACE policies. Various indicators point out that different sample individuals' rankings on the items do present a distinct distribution of responses. Their responses are far from identical and are worthy of further analysis.

Table 7.2 Distribution of the sample's responses to national ACE policies.

Mean	61.287	Std err	1.180	Std dev	13.038
Variance	169.991	Kurtosis	-.851	S E Kurt	.435
Skewness	-.245	S E Skew	.219	Range	52.000
Minimum	32.000	Maximum	84.000	Sum	7477.000
Percentile	Value	Percentile	Value	Percentile	Value
25.00	50.750	50.00	64.000	75.00	71.000
Valid cases	122	Missing cases	18		

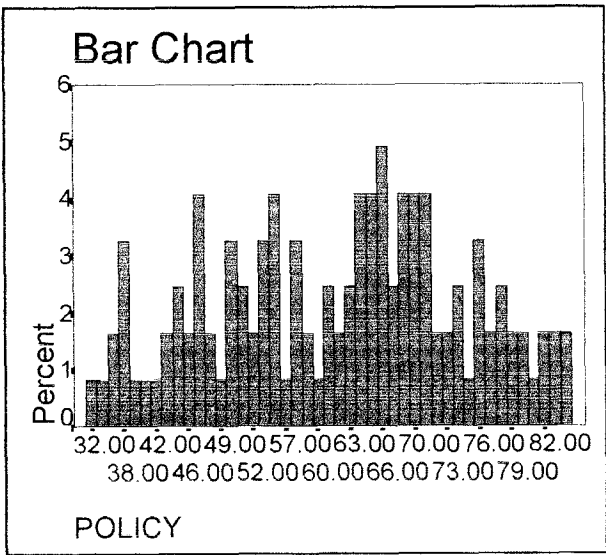


Figure 7.2 Distribution of the sample's responses to national ACE policies.

### Description of data on the interview materials

Interview materials were collected in a semi-structured form developed from the research questions and main findings of the postal questionnaire survey. Interviewees naturally responded according to their degree of realisation, and experiences, and via comments, and

direct reactions to the questions. Their responses were mainly based on the role they played in ACE and therefore reflects, in some degree, the practice of their institutions, especially the DFE, FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, HMI, NIACE, and ALBSU. These data make up their individual viewpoints and institutional practices, and refer to the relevant documents and literature. The researcher dealt with these interview materials according to the order of the analytical topics and the differences among interviewees and their institutions. Accordingly, the researcher formed an analytical framework as a basis from which to describe and discuss the interview materials. This framework is broken down into four stages or dimensions, ie, description, classification, interpretation and comparison. Interview materials were organised by interviewee to begin with and then classified in terms of their similarities and differences. Crucial and radically different responses were further interpreted if they promised to reveal more implications. Finally, interview materials were compared on the individual topics in an effort to answer the research questions or were compared with the findings of questionnaires.

## **7.2 Policy-makers in national ACE policy-making**

As the literature review has shown, the DFE played a major role in national ACE policy-making. The DFE might conduct its role by bilateral or multilateral, intradepartmental or interdepartmental interaction with other relevant organisations. The DFE and these organisations were potential policy-makers in national ACE policy-making. Although the extent of their involvement in this process would differ, every policy-maker might influence ACE policy-making to some degree.

### **The role of the DFE**

According to interviewees, the DFE basically followed a pluralist process in ACE policy-making. ACE policy proposals might have different original sources. For instance, Ministers' ideas were mostly deemed significant and, comparatively, employers' influences were growing. The DFE mainly interacted with government departments, advisory bodies, and professional organisations. However, the DFE had been expected to open its doors more widely so as to provide participatory opportunities to outsiders, especially to academics.

Civil servants, Mr Alex Kirwan and Mr Stephen Kershaw, responsible for ACE in the DFE revealed the development and process of the DFE's ACE policy-making. Generally, policy initiatives might come out of discussion at the most senior political level, ie, Cabinet discussion, and many of these might be commitments made in the election manifesto of the governing party; but it was more likely that they would come from the initiative of Ministers or senior officials of any particular Government department. The general sources of policy were as follows. First, Ministers had their own ideas or referred to the Government's policy as a whole. They might also be responsible to other influences. Second, civil servants might draw up their draft policy and then develop it into a formal policy. Third, demands of pressure groups might become a part of policy via lobbying. Fourth, demands of employers might reflect on policy-making through different paths. For example, when Ministers had a long-term consideration, they asked officials to develop proposals and options and discussed which way the policy should go, how it should proceed and so forth. The White Paper was the final proposal of policy. The publication of the White Paper provided opportunities for discussion. If major policies required legislation, there was a clear timetable to follow, starting with the announcement of the policy in a consultative 'White Paper' and culminating in the publication of legislation, which was then thoroughly debated and amended in the Parliament. There might be some differences in this process, for instance by the publication of a 'Green Paper' before (or instead of) the White Paper, where the Government wished to set out a broader range of options for public debate. As to more minor policy initiatives, they were generally instigated by officials-sometimes of quite junior levels- very often in consultation with non-Government experts. The pluralist process in ACE policy-making was common. Officials had opportunities to provide ideas and draft policies. The White Paper gave the public the opportunity to discuss these via the press. Ministers also actively consulted with major professional organisations, advisory bodies and quangos like the FEFCs. Among the government departments, Ministers had personal informal discussion when they needed to. There was a ministerial committee which had one regular meeting per month. The influence of the Prime Minister was crucial. The Prime Minister was responsible for all the policies of the different departments. For all Government's policies, he/she must find time to look closely at educational policy.

## *Chapter 7 Analysis of Empirical Data*

NIACE and ALBSU were two chief ACE professional organisations which the DFE usually consulted with. Both the director of NIACE, Mr Alan Tuckett, and the director of ALBSU, Mr Alan Wells, had many opportunities to participate in the DFE's ACE policy-making. However, they both suggested that the DFE included more outsiders in its ACE policy-making such as high-level civil servants in government departments, association of local councils, pressure groups, different sectors, practitioners, employers and so on.

Academics who were lecturers in ACE or educational policy-making indicated that a pluralist process was necessary for the DFE, but it was still very inadequate. Until the early 1980s, LEAs and teacher organisations were involved in educational policy-making although it is arguable how influential they were. Clearly they were not represented in educational policy-making and had been replaced by other influences and parties (Professor Ball). For example, employers had become much more significant and the process of policy-making was influenced by many bodies like the previous FEU but few scholars are included. Britain is described by Professor Jarvis as not a very academic country. Nonetheless academics could influence the DFE's policy-making by (Professor Duke): 1. directly lobbying, persuasion and keeping a close relationship with senior civil servants; 2. Keeping up with the significant issues and making their comments through the mass media; 3. getting involved in organisations with employers and letting them pass on their views to the right parties. However, the real influence of academics in ACE policy-making is still limited and uncertain.

Accordingly, in terms of the pluralist process of ACE policy-making, the DFE had not done enough. There had been interaction between the DFE and its partners in ACE policy-making but the involvement of more outsiders was in great demand. Most interviewees have made the above demand although there were some differences in responses. Civil servants in the DFE mainly pointed out that the DFE's ACE policy-making did follow a pluralist process since they were a part of the DFE and might be policy-makers. They, the insiders, were likely to say ACE policy-making is open to outsiders even when this only partly true. Though the NIACE and ALBSU were mostly funded by the DFE, they are much more independent than

the quangos and play the role like professional and pressure groups. They are more concerned about outsiders' participation in the ACE policy-making, especially, that of the groups they represent. Academics were much more critical so they had comparatively more criticisms to make up DFE's policy-making. They were also concerned about their rights and powers of influence in the DFE's ACE policy-making. In spite of their differences in degree according to the role they play, the interviewees' demand of a more pluralistic process in the DFE's ACE policy-making is quite clear.

### **The roles of relevant organisations**

The researcher has discussed the fact that main relevant organisations like the FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE, and ALBSU maintained a close relationship with the DFE in ACE policy-making. How did these organisations play their role? Interviewees from each organisation shared with the researcher their experience and understanding.

#### ***FEFCs***

The role of FEFCs in ACE policy-making after the 1992 FHEA has become more significant. Interviewees, Mr Kirwan in the DFE and Mr David Croome and Ms Emily Thrane in the FEFC for England, all emphasised this trend. Since the 1992 FHEA, the FEFCs have been funded with more money to serve ACE. They mainly provided qualifying, vocational, and adult basic courses as listed in Schedule 2. The FEFCs' basic role was to fund sectors providing ACE by setting up the funding formula. They had to evaluate the quality of provision and report to the DFE. For example, the priorities of the Council for England were as follows: 1 To maintain the security of public money in colleges; to see how the budget is spent. 2 To fund courses run by colleges and LEAs which led to qualifications and higher education. 3 To expand further education and improve its quality through designing funding methodology to encourage colleges. 4 To meet the need of basic education for the disabled with learning difficulties. 5 To begin to develop its own planning mechanism. 6 To establish a system for inspecting further education in colleges. In ACE policy-making, the FEFC kept a close relationship with the DFE. The DFE passed its directions on it. There were representatives of the DFE and of the former Department for Employment, who attended the



Council's meetings. The Council offered advice to the government each year. The Council set up committees to look at significant aspects of policy, such as students with learning difficulties, and a funding methodology. The chairman and chief executives quite regularly met ministers. The Council had an annual strategy meeting which usually had ministers or senior civil servants joining in. It had an annual conference that was always attending a speaker from the DFE. The Council kept a close relationship with the DFE. It accepted the DFE's directions and gave it advice.

### ***HEFCs***

Like the FEFCs, the HEFCs were established after the 1992 FHEA. They can influence ACE at the higher education level, such as in extra-mural studies, or say, the university extension. As Ms Kate Nickols of the HEFC for England said, the Council in performing this role will: encourage institutions to meet the demands of students cost-effectively while promoting and assessing quality in teaching and research; encourage diversity in the provision of higher education, a widening of access and greater opportunities; develop active partnerships with institutions, which fully recognise their autonomy; encourage institutions to build on their strengths and expand their local, regional, national, and international roles; encourage institutions to support these aims and ensure the effective and efficient use of their funds and assets.

The HEFCs maintain relationships with other organisations. The Councils are a semi-governmental body. They were mainly funded by the DFE. The DFE published guidelines and directions showing what it wanted the HEFCs to do. Most of the members of the Councils were named by the DFE. Therefore, the DFE could make its policies known to the Councils. The Councils could make its own policies mostly in relation to funding. These Councils could affect the DFE's higher education policies. They provided information about the practice of higher education and made suggestions to the DFE. The chairman and senior executives had the opportunity to join in the DFE's policy-making. Regular dialogues took place between the two sides via meetings.

Compared with the FEFCs, the HEFCs have a more specific role in ACE. Their main responsibility is focused on continuing education at the higher education level. Like the FEFCs, the HEFCs fell under the DFE's leadership and expected to receive its directions regarding ACE policy-making.

### ***FEU***

The FEU was an advisory organisation for the DFE. As Ms Anna Reisenberger of the FEU said, the FEU is a research and advisory body. It is an independent institution led by a board of management. It undertakes a wide range of activities through its central and regional offices and works closely with other national training and education agencies. It maintains a close relationship with further education colleges and sometimes evaluates provision. Most of the time, it provides services. Guidance, advice, and information are offered in this field through published reports and bulletins, and via seminars and conferences. It spends half, ie, 50% of its budget on adults over 19. The other half is for young adults from 16 to 19.

The FEU conducts much research and makes suggestions to the government and colleges. Research is commissioned by the government departments or other organisations. Its suggestions concerning debates, needs, and problems could influence the DFE's policies. The DFE did seriously consider the FEU's suggestions and some of them were reflected in the DFE's policy-making. The chairman of the Unit had the opportunity to participate in the DFE's policy-making. Senior officers also held regular meetings at the DFE. The DFE also issued directions and guidelines to the FEU through regular and informal meetings. As an advisory body, the FEU also played a significant role in ACE policy-making and maintained a close relationship with the DFE. Even after the FHEA 1992, its status remains still ambiguous. In spring 1995, the FEU was merged with the further education staff college and became the 'Further Education Development Agency'(FEDA). FEDA's aims are to promote quality in teaching and learning through curriculum development and support for further education institutions, to provide leadership in curriculum design and development and to help ensure effective management of colleges. Sixth form colleges and adult learners are included in the Agency's remit. It also contributes to the national debate on post-16 by its

participation in national and regional steering groups, advisory committees and working parties (NIACE, 1997). As discussed earlier, while adult learners have been getting more from further education institutions, the significance of the FEDA's role in ACE policy-making has also been growing.

### ***NIACE***

The NIACE plays an influential and active role in ACE. It is the national organisation for ACE. the director of NIACE, Mr Tuckett, introduced the idea that the constitutional object of the Institute is the promotion of study and the general advancement of ACE, and the Institute offers a forum for consultation and cooperation for all the varied interests in this diverse field. It provides an information-and-advice service to organisations and individuals. It designs and carries out research and development projects and organises conferences and seminars.

The NIACE played an important role in the DFE's policy-making in ACE. The NIACE received 15% of its total budget from the DFE. It had the responsibility to offer suggestions and consultations to the DFE. The NIACE maintains close contacts with local government, statutory and voluntary sectors, professional organisations, practitioners, employers, and adult learners. The interaction between the NIACE and the above organisations and individuals take place through partnerships, formal and informal meetings, national and local conferences, publications, and so forth. The NIACE reflects and filters the different needs of ACE from outsiders to the Government. It paid close attention DFE policy-making. The NIACE also communicated DFE's policies to outsiders to help them understand DFE policies. It was a bridge between the DFE and outsiders and was a filter for and stimulator of ACE policy-making.

The NIACE is an active professional organisation in ACE. For instance, its recent struggles have been about ACE for the aged, the unemployed, and the disabled. It comprises a diversity of members including government's officials, academics, practitioners and individuals. It can exert its influence in multiple ways.

### ***ALBSU***

Like the NIACE, the ALBSU plays a significant role in ACE. By comparison, however, its role is specifically in adult basic education. Since adult basic education is a funded course according to Schedule 2, ALBSU has also increase its importance. The director of ALBSU, Mr Wells, introduced ALBSU as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. It provides consultancy and advisory services, sponsors a range of national and local development projects, produces and publishes teaching and learning materials, co-ordinates and funds staff training, allocates grants to voluntary organisations and funds research. ALBSU was funded by the DFE but plays an independent role. It is the main institution for adult basic skills and education.

In adult basic skills and education, ALBSU plays an important role. It did research, provided recommendations, and influenced the DFE's policies in this area. When participating in this process, ALBSU had its partners. The partnership is very flexible. In the government departments, it also had close cooperation with Home Office in teaching English for immigrants. It establishes relationships with various colleges for serving provision. It also cooperates with pressure groups struggling for more resources.

Compared with the NIACE, ALBSU's role and responsibility are specific in adult basic education. In this field, it played a vital influential role in the DFE's ACE policy-making. ALBSU changed its name to 'The Basic Skill Agency' in summer, 1995. The change of name implies that the Agency's target group is not merely limited to adult population but it has expanded its concerns about basic skills issues across the age range (NIACE, 1997). For instance, as mentioned before, The Agency has exerted efforts in research upon family literacy recently, in which parents and their children are all included as target groups.

The FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE, and ALBSU can be classified into three groups. The first group is the quangos. The FEFCs and HEFCs are semi-governmental organisations, called quangos. Although they could operate independently to some extent and could make their own policy in theory, they were highly influenced by the DFE. Since the 1992 FHEA, both

the FEFCs and HEFCs have gained more power in ACE policy-making, especially more generally speaking the FEFCs in ACE. The second group is the advisory body. The FEU is funded by the government, now the FEFCs, and was an advisory body to the DFE. It closely interacted with the DFE in ACE. The third group is professional organisations. Both the NIACE and ALBSU are independent professional organisations though they got large grants from the DFE. They played an independent role in ACE via participation in the DFE's policy-making. Particularly, the NIACE plays a wider role in ACE policy-making than ALBSU. In total, the FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE and ALBSU were the main partners of the DFE in ACE policy-making. Their directors and senior executives had the opportunities to be involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making through formal and informal occasions.

### **7.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

Factors affecting national ACE policy-making were explored in the literature review, questionnaire survey in person and interviews in stage 1, and then were confirmed by the responses of the sample in stage 2. In this section, data collected via these postal questionnaire surveys and interviews of stage 2 will be analysed to show the factors affecting national ACE policy-making.

#### **Postal questionnaire survey**

Influential factors measured by the postal questionnaire were analysed to test the original classification, to examine the questionnaire's validity and reliability, and to compare the importance of each factor group and its factor. The statistical methods applied here comprise Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Reliability, and Frequency.

#### **CFA**

CFA was particularly to test the proposed factor structure. In contrast, another type of Factor Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), was able to inspect the possible factor structure. The classification of influential factors in this research was constructed in accordance with the literature review, and interviews at stage 1, and then was concretely

divided into five factors. CFA was used to confirm this classification via the sample's perceptions and responses.

There are different indicators for deciding the grouping of each item, or say, each variable. The general indicator refers to each item's loading with respect to its the factor. Loadings are the correlations between variables and factors. Cattell (1978, p. 178) defines loadings as values derived from the correlations of factors with the variables when the correlations among the factors themselves are allowed for. Gorsuch (1983, p. 29) also indicates that a measure of the degree of generalisability found between each variable and each factor is calculated and referred to as a factor loading. Factor loadings reflect the quantitative relationships. In addition to factor loadings, researchers can refer to the theories upon which the original questionnaire or scale is based for the purpose of interpretation.

CFA contains various steps and approaches. The researcher employed Principal Components Analysis to extract factors, and the Varimax method to rotate the factor structure. The number of the factor was decided by the eigenvalue. Use of CFA allowed the researcher to directly defines the number of factors as being 5. The rotated factor matrix in Figure 7.3 indicates the results used to consider the item grouping.

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
F19	<b>.74936</b>	.12245	.22229	.11540	-.09255
F17	<b>.72154</b>	.23870	.16005	.03711	.04498
F18	<b>.69583</b>	.05128	.15064	.27645	-.10119
F16	<b>.68604</b>	.30347	-.07428	.23028	.13199
F1	<b>-.35322</b>	.14614	.33419	.05871	.30642
F13	.10455	<b>.81719</b>	.19900	.00710	.10494
F15	.11188	<b>.73530</b>	.11611	.18006	-.11564
F12	.21330	<b>.59282</b>	.19223	.16055	.14248
F11	.12185	<b>.58443</b>	.40720	.10284	-.00730
F2	.32125	<b>.49327</b>	.08419	.05401	.42172
F10	.21488	.08446	<b>.81103</b>	.06227	.01595
F7	.22728	.10767	<b>.75622</b>	-.02590	.23544
F14	.14212	.06543	<b>.65743</b>	.16510	-.01705
F9	.05959	.19385	<b>.63012</b>	.23426	.02763
F8	-.04209	.27379	<b>.60674</b>	.00181	-.01594
F20	.47094	-.01796	<b>.47156</b>	.26246	-.05532
F23	.39867	.22885	.02501	<b>.75881</b>	-.01736
F21	.38959	.22955	-.04966	<b>.73587</b>	-.01417
F24	-.11341	-.08157	.08892	<b>.72719</b>	.14534
F22	.20989	.19513	.20381	<b>.70583</b>	-.08224
F25	.36877	.34415	.11602	<b>.48476</b>	.03356
F4	-.07509	-.06695	.34063	<b>.38518</b>	.22782
F6	-.28422	.16869	.34833	<b>.37833</b>	.22363
F5	-.16146	-.00768	.06210	-.05084	<b>.81367</b>
F3	.47442	.12086	.12520	.19600	<b>.52436</b>

**Figure 7.3** The rotated factor matrix of the questionnaire measuring influential factors.

Figure 7.3 shows the factor structure of the questionnaire measuring influential factors. Referring to the questionnaire in Appendix C, we see that items 1 to 5 were Political factors; items 6 to 10 Economic factors; items 11 to 15 Social factors; items 16 to 20 Educational factors; items 21 to 25 Learner factors. The matrix above indeed suggests a similar classification. Items which listed under the same factor came together and formed a group. We can see the ordered groups had different items. This classification was based on the factor loadings. Each item had the largest loading for its classified group. According to the matrix, items 19, 17, 18, 16, and 1 were in the same group. Except the item 1, this group is

the original Educational factor. So factor 1 above can be named the Educational factor. Items 13, 15, 12, 11 and 2 were in a common group. Except item 2, they belong to the designated Social factor. Thus factor 2 above can be defined as the Social factor. Items 10, 7, 14, 8, 9, and 20 were in the same group. Except for items 14 and 20, this group is the proposed Economic factor. So factor 3 above can be called the Economic factor. Items 23, 24, 21, 22, 25, 4, and 6, Excluding items 4 and 6, were the original Learner factor. So factor 4 above can be named the Learner factor. Items 5 and 3 are both in the expected Political factor. Factor 5 above can be called the Political factor. The preceding classification is based on each item's factor loadings. We find that some factors were not included in the proposed groups. So, another indicator, in reference to the theoretical framework, was applied. When referring to the theoretical framework, the researcher still had to consider the factor loadings, the basic criterion for item grouping. For an item to be reclassified, the condition is that it is the second highest loading in its new factor. The minimum loading which allows the regrouping of items generally is the absolute value of .30. As Gorsuch argues, if the variable has high loadings on several factors, then the variance of the variable must be subjectively divided for interpretative purposes (Gorsuch, 1983, p. 210). Gorsuch's phrase 'subjectively divided for interpretative purposes', refers to the theoretical framework for the purpose of interpretation.

Based on the rules above, items which were in the 'wrong' groups are reclassified below. Under factor 1, the Educational factor, item 1 was misclassified. It originally belonged to factor 5, the Political factor. From the factor matrix, we can see the loading of item 1 for factor 5 was  $.30642 > .30$ . So it can be grouped under factor 5. Under factor 2, item 2 was misclassified. Its expected group was factor 5. The loading of item 2 for factor 5 was  $.42172 > .30$ . This confirms that item 2 can be moved to factor 5. Under factor 3, the Economic factor, items 14 and 20 were misclassified. Item 14 was expected to be in factor 2, the Social factor, whereas Item 20 should be in factor 1, the Educational factor. Item 14's loading for factor 2 was  $.06543 < .30$ . The loading was smaller than .30 so item 14 cannot be classified under factor 3. After again referring to the original framework, the researcher could not let item 14 'stay' in factor 3. Thus, the alternative was to delete it. Item 20's loading



for factor 1 was  $.47094 > .30$ . It was thus changed from factor 3 to 1. In factor 4, both items 4 and 6 were misgrouped. Item 4 should have been classified under factor 5; item 6 under factor 3. Item 4's loading for factor 5 was  $.22782 < .30$ . So it could not be regrouped in factor 5 but had to be left out. The loading of item 6 for factor 3 was  $.34833 > .30$ . Unlike item 4, item 6 could be placed under factor 3. So far, items 4 and 14 have been given up; items 1, 2, 6, and 20 have been placed back in their original groups. As to the number of items in each factor, factors 1, 3, and 4 each include 5 items whereas factors 2 and 5 have only 4 items. Thus, for the purpose of balance for further comparison, the researcher deleted item 20 in factor 1, item 6 in factor 3, and item 25 in factor 4, which all had the lowest loading in their respective groups. Finally, each factor ended up with 4 items.

The final result of the CFA of influential factors are listed in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3** The result of CFA of influential factors.

Factor	Community	Eigenvalue	Percent of variance	Cumulated percent of variance
<b>Educational factor</b>				
1 demand for increasing traditional liberal ACE.	.5864			
2 adult continuing education trends in the world.	.5762	6.9192	27.70	27.70
3 desire for cooperation between statutory and voluntary ACE sectors.	.5495			
4 influences of updated educational theories.	.6219			
<b>Economic factor</b>				
5 demands for skilful workforce from employers.	.6329			
6 national economic condition for providing ACE.	.4629	2.5333	10.10	37.80
7 funding supports from enterprises for ACE provision.	.3956			
8 quality of manpower in the labour market.	.6493			
<b>Social factor</b>				
9 development of information technology used for ACE.	.5864			
10 demographic trends of society eg the increase of aged people.	.5762	1.6445	6.60	44.40
11 reorganisation of the social class structure.	.5495			
12 change of the living style of the public.	.6219			
<b>Learner factor</b>				
13 participation motivation of adults for learning.	.7317			
14 adults' demand for literacy and numeracy education.	.5795	1.4567	5.80	50.20
15 the diversity of adult learning needs.	.7757			
16 adults' economic ability to pay the fees for learning.	.4903			
<b>Political factor</b>				
17 ideas of the political party in power.	.4105			
18 ideas of opposition Parties.	.5218	1.2025	4.80	55.50
19 demands from professional organisations of ACE.	.5812			
20 influences of civil servants.	.6273			

Table 7.3 needs further discussion below. After CFA, the influential factors comprised 5 factor groups, which each contained 4 factors. These 5 factor groups were: Educational, Economic, Social, Learner, and Political factors. The Community of a variable (item) is that proportion of its variance that can be accounted for by the common factor. The higher the Community, the closer the relationship between each factor and its item. Communities of the total 20 items were between .3956 and .7757. The eigenvalue is the indicator for determining factor number. The minimum of each factor's eigenvalue is  $\geq 1.00$ . Table 7.3 shows that the 5 factors' eigenvalues were from 1.2025 to 6.9192. Percent of variance refers to the variance of the whole instrument that can be explained by each factor. The final list indicates that the Educational factor had the highest percent of variance, ie, 27.70%, followed by the Economic factor with 10.10%. The cumulated percent of variance was

55.00%. This number signifies that up to 55.50% of the total variance of influential factors can be explained by these 5 Factors. The results of the CFA were able to meet the requirement of the statistical examination and theoretical framework.

### ***Validity and Reliability***

Validity and Reliability are both essential conditions of an objective instrument. Validity is an indicator showing the extent to which the instrument used can correctly measure what it wants to evaluate. Reliability is an indicator revealing the extent to which the instrument is reliable.

#### **Validity**

Factor Analysis is one of the methods used for examining Validity. The results of our CFA of influential factors suggest that the sample's responses to the questionnaire did match the original design quite well. The designed questionnaire included 5 proposed factor groups. From the questionnaire, we could clearly recognise that there were 5 groups, ie, Educational, Economic, Social, Learner, and Political factors. The analysed result also support this classification. The questionnaire therefore has a quite high 'Face Validity', which is one sort of Validity. This means that we can define the structure of an instrument from its appearance. Referring to Appendix C, we can determine the various factors from the appearance of the questionnaire and its appearance indeed represents its actual structure. Accordingly, the questionnaire has a high 'Face Validity'.

#### **Reliability**

Reliability here can be examined via the inter correlations among the different factor groups. This kind of Reliability is called 'Inner Consistence Reliability'. It is signified by the value named 'Cronbach  $\alpha$ '. The higher the Cronbach  $\alpha$ , the higher the reliability. All of the coefficients of correlation among the different factors and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  of the whole questionnaire are listed in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4** Correlations among the five factor groups and the totality of influential factors.

	Edf	Ecf	Sof	Lef	Pof	Factor
Edf	1					
Ecf	.2994***	1				
Sof	.4887***	.4188***	1			
Lef	.4797***	.2687**	.3917***	1		
Pof	.2249*	.3364***	.3652***	.1851*	1	
Factor	.7294***	.6711***	.7715***	.7716***	.5414***	1

**Note.** Edf: Educational factor Ecf: Economic factor Sof: Social factor  
Lef: Learner's factor Pof: Political factor  
\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 7.4 shows the coefficients of correlation among the different factors and the totality of influential factors. All of the correlations attained statistical significance at the .05, .01 or .001 levels. This shows that all the correlations among the various factors and the totality of influential factors achieved an over .05 significance level. The correlation coefficient,  $r$ , was between .185 and .772. The lowest  $r$  was between the Learner and Political factors,  $r = .185$ . Its significance,  $p = .04$ , was smaller than .05. The highest  $r$  appeared between the Learner factor and the totality of influential factors ( $r = .772$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  of the whole questionnaire was .856 ( $N = 106$ ). In general, the minimum Cronbach  $\alpha$  for a reliable instrument is .50. Thus, the value, .856, is quite acceptable.

the evidence of both tests of Validity and Reliability, suggests that the questionnaire measuring influential factors is an effective and reliable instrument. The high Face Validity shows that it can evaluate what it seems to. Its significant Inner Consistence Reliability supports its claim to reliability. Accordingly, the questionnaire meets the two basic statistical criteria. It can be employed as a useful instrument and is both effective and reliable for further analyses.

***Frequency analysis of each item***

In order to elicit more information from the sample's responses, each item was further analysed, based on the sample's rankings. There were 5 alternatives for each item: from not at all important to extremely important. The frequency and percent of the ticked alternative for each item might reveal tendencies in the sample's opinions. After the data presentation, we could easily discover the degree of each item's importance from its ranking by the sample. After Factor Analysis, items 4, 6, 14, 20, and 25 were deleted and are excluded in the following discussion.

Table 7.5 lists each item's highest frequency and the percent of valid ranking by the whole sample.

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**Table 7.5** Analysis of each item's highest frequency and percent of influential factors.

Items	Not at all important	Not very important	Quite important	Very important	Extremely important
<b>Educational factor</b>					
1 demand for increasing traditional liberal ACE.		32.50% N=39			
2 adult continuing education trends in the world.		45.50% N=56			
3 desire for cooperation between statutory and voluntary ACE sectors.			49.20% N=60		
4 influences of updated educational theories.		37.70% N=46			
<b>Economic factor</b>					
5 demands for skilful workforce from employers.			41.10% N=51		
6 national economic condition for providing ACE.				47.50% N=57	
7 funding supports from enterprises for ACE provision.			38.00% N=46		
8 quality of manpower in the labour market.			47.20% N=58		
<b>Social factor</b>					
9 development of information technology used for ACE.			37.90% N=47		
10 demographic trends of society eg the increase of aged people.			36.60% N=45		
11 reorganisation of the social class structure.		41.80% N=51			
12 change of the living style of the public.			36.60% N=45		
<b>Learner factor</b>					
13 participation motivation of adults for learning.				37.40% N=46	
14 adults' demand for literacy and numeracy education.				39.00% N=47	
15 the diversity of adult learning needs.				38.20% N=47	
16 adults' economic ability to pay the fees for learning.				39.80% N=49	
<b>Political factor</b>					
17 ideas of the political party in power.				49.20% N=61	
18 ideas of opposition Parties.		45.90% N=56			
19 demands from professional organisations of ACE.			52.40% N=65		
20 influences of civil servants.			41.50% N=51		

Table 7.5 shows that the sample's ranking of each item presented differences in their deemed extent of importance. Nine items were ranked as quite important. These included items 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 19, and 20. Six items ranked as very important, comprising items 6 (N=57, 47.50%), 13 (N=46, 37.40%), 14 (N=48, 39.00%), 15 (N=47, 38.20%), 16 (N=49, 39.80%), and 17 (N=61, 49.20%). Five items were selected as not very important. These comprised

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items 1 (N=39, 32.50%), 2 (N=56, 45.50%), 4 (N=46, 37.70%), 11 (N=51, 41.80%), and 18 (N=56, 45.90%). No item was seen as not at all important or as extremely important.

The result of analyses of the items ranked by the sample mostly supports the findings and arguments derived from the literature review and data collection at stage 1. Most of the sample have indicated by their rankings that the major influential factors affecting national ACE policy-making in England and Wales are: adult participation motivation, adult basic education, and diverse needs. Most of the sample have also mentioned the obvious importance of economic conditions and the political party in power. Some educational factors were ranked as not very important. This shows that relevant updated educational theories and the current ACE trend in the world does not importantly affect national ACE policy-making. The decline of traditional liberal adult education was pointed out as well.

The influential factors confirmed above were used for discussion with interviewees at stage 2. The researcher collected interviewees' opinions of these influential factors by referring to the findings of the questionnaire survey or letting them directly express their own viewpoints regarding factors affecting national ACE policy-making. The following was concluded from the interviewees' responses.

#### *Ranking the importance of influential factors*

Since the importance of each factor in the factor groups was ranked from 1 to 5 on the postal questionnaire survey-the higher the score the greater the importance-it could be ranked through the total score. There were four items in each factor group. The degree of each group's importance could be compared with the total score for the 4 factors. The cumulated score of each factor could be shown by means. Accordingly, the five factors' means are as follows.

(1) Educational factor = 9.629;

(2) Economic factor = 13.073;

(3) Social factor = 10.944;

(4) Learner factor = 14.285;

(5) Political factor = 12.532.

The above means for each of the five factors show the following order of ranked importance:

**Learner factor > Economic factor > Political factor > Social factor > Educational factor.**

The Learner factor was seen as the most influential one affecting national ACE policy-making. But, importantly, it is closely followed by the Economic factor. The Political factor also has a mean similar to the Economic factor's. Comparatively, the Social and Educational factors have been ranked as less influential. By linking the analysis of data collected via the postal questionnaire survey and interviewee, the framework of factors affecting national ACE policy-making becomes more clear.

### **Supplementary influential factors**

In order to avoid excluding potentially important influential factors not listed by the researcher, there was an open question in the questionnaire to allow the sample to supply their own viewpoints about influential factors .

### ***Educational factor***

With the respect to the Educational factor, the supplemented factors included:

(1) NVQ;

(2) NETTs for lifelong learning;

(3) The difficulty in making government understand the importance of a liberal adult education network;

(4) Ideas which value vocational education and devalues nonvocational education;

(5) Lack of belief in the value of adult education as a tool for social interaction.



The DFE's ACE policy-making had become much more practical. As Schedule 2 shows, qualifying and vocational provision had been the focus of the DFE's policy agenda. Therefore, national qualifications and national targets which had a clear economic function had been the goal of ACE policy-making. Since this emphasis of policy has been in effect, vocational ACE had increased its significance; in contrast, nonvocational ACE had been marginalised. Liberal ACE and ACE with less practical economic functions, such as social interaction, had waned. So, it is not difficult to understand why the above five points were listed.

### ***Economic factor***

One listed economic factor was: attitudes of employers and employer sponsorship patterns. Employers who could directly impact the development of the labour market had gained more influence in the DFE's ACE policy-making. The labour market is one of the major factors affecting ACE policy-making when the DFE strived to reach its economic targets. Therefore, employees' attitudes and sponsorship patterns of concern to ACE may influence ACE policy-making and can be seen as an economic factor.

### ***Learner factor***

- (1) the increase in young adults aged 16-19 squeezes out adult learners.
- (2) local needs

Partly because of encouragement by government policies, partly because of the economic recession, more young adults have been continuing their learning to update skills or vocational qualifications. Thus Powell (1993) found that there was evidence to suggest that proactive marketing strategies have resulted in increased enrolments. For instance, more younger age groups have been found in the City Lit. As to local needs, this was an important factor when LEAs offered their provision. However, since the LEAs lost their power to serve ACE, ACE courses have become much more identical, ie, they are all courses listed in the Schedule 2. That traditional trait, ACE diversity has gradually declined. In terms of national ACE policy-making, local needs actually have had less influence.

***Political factor***

From a broader political perspective, ie, including administration, there were four points listed here.

- (1) European Union influence;
- (2) Professional bodies;
- (3) FEFC is remote from communities;
- (4) Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) have no experience in planning community-based education.

The above four points were supplemented to indicate the influence, in the political dimension, including the government, quangos and professional bodies. Since Britain is a member state of the European Union, the DFE's ACE policy-making might be influenced by the Union. For example, the 1996 European Lifelong Learning Year is a common policy of the member countries. The FEFC and TECs are quangos which could affect the DFE's ACE policy-making. Especially after the 1992 FHEA and the closer link between ACE and the labour market, the FEFC and TECs have expanded their influence. Professional bodies of ACE are pressure groups that could influence the DFE's ACE policy-making through lobbying, as has been discussed previously.

This analysis of the sample's supplementary influential factors affecting national ACE policy-making mostly support the literature review and findings at stage 1. In conjunction with the Educational, Economic, Learner, and Political factors, certain of the supplemented factors are useful, especially since they mostly reflect the sample's opinions.

**Interviewees' responses**

Interviewees' responses to and comprehensive discussion of possible factors affecting national ACE policy-making were analysed based on the list of different factors.

***Economic factor***

The Economic factor is the factor which has been stressed by all interviewees. The Economic competitiveness of this country is a crucially influential factor affecting the Government's policy-making. Young adults and adults are expected to be qualified in the workplace. The Government's target is to improve the competitiveness of the economy. Therefore, qualifications and vocational courses, more involvement of employers and national targets have been the indicators and criteria for education and training. As Mr David West, HMI and Head of Post Compulsory Education emphasised, vocation and qualifications have been the focus of the government's further and adult education. NETTs and GNVQs are both clear indicators. These targets are aimed to achieve this country's economic goals.

Adult education has become more practical. Employment and employers' needs have been the targets for continuing learning. Britain has suffered from the problems of low skills and low education participation. In order to compete in the global market, ACE has been empowered with more practical responsibilities for economic purposes. Mostly fed by the Conservative government's ideologies, the market-driven purposes of ACE are the main concerns of neo-liberalism and Thatcherism which the Conservative Party must bear in mind.

Accordingly, British competitiveness in the global market, employers' demands, workforce training, and other practical reasons have been raised as economic factors. And, economic factors have become a significant force affecting ACE policy-making. If we refer to the findings of the postal questionnaire survey, the Economic factor closely follows the Learner factor, which can be merged with the Economic factor and then supported by the Political factor. The Economic factor and Learner factor, especially when directly towered economic goals, can be seen as the major influential factors.

***Learner factor***

As to learner factors, Learner demands are one of the underlying factors which guided the DFE's ACE policy-making and the DFE and FEFCs were sensitive to adults' and training

needs. Unfortunately the DFE did not respond to their needs adequately. Adult demands are diverse and sometimes they are difficult to respond to. But, because of the economic recession, more adults must learn to survive in the labour market through vocation and qualification courses. That compelled the DFE to emphasise mostly the economic targets of ACE.

According to the interviewees' responses, adult demands are so diverse that sometimes it is difficult to rank their degree of influence. Some of them, such as adult participation in lifetime learning, may affect ACE policy-making. To encourage adults to pursue lifetime learning and contribute to Britain's economy was DFE policy. Adults who pursue learning for its own sake and for a liberal education are not funding priorities. When adult demands overlapped with the DEF's, however, with both aiming for economic targets, learner and economic factors can merge.

### ***Political factor***

Some of the interviewees mentioned political factors, such as the ideology of the government. It is normally important in this country to create an agenda for policy-making. The government used to give more attention to formal education. ACE was not a priority, especially of the previous Conservative government, which had been in power for over fourteen years. Education was mainly for the elites and school education was the central process for teaching Victorian values and good citizenship. Adult education was thought by the Conservative government to be less academic. Adult educators were less professional and sometimes they were described as educational workers. The Conservative Party, Thatcherism and the New Right debate, had very much moved into the free market from an economic perspective. However, even these political ideologies can be said to be based on the economic reasons. For instance, Thatcherism was a consequence of the global market. It is very hard to say which is the chicken and which is the egg.

The Political factors shown are mainly the ideologies of political parties. It has been argued that there is no difference between the Conservative and Labour Parties. But, the

Conservative Party, because of its long term of leadership, had obviously a great impact on ACE policy-making. Additionally, since Conservative leadership was replaced by that of the Labour Party in May of 1997, we have seen the strong intention of the Labour government to reform British education through its policy-making. The Labour government has made a commitment to lifelong learning, in which process ACE occupies a critical position through the establishment of the National Advisory Group, alongside other initiatives-the New Deal, the University for Industry, Target 2000-and its expression of support for the Kennedy committee on widening participation (Fryer, 1997). The author will discuss the new Labour government's educational policy-making further in chapter 9.

Table 7.6 summarises the interviewees' viewpoints on factors affecting national ACE policy-making. In Table 7.6, The Learner factor includes adult demands and participation; the Economic factor comprises economic purposes and vocational targets; the Political factor, government and political-party ideologies.

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**Table 7.6** Interviewees' viewpoints in factors affecting national ACE policy-making

	Learner factor	Economic factor	Political factor	Other factor
Mr Kirwan (DFE)	X	X		
Ms Melville (Birkbeck college)	X	X	X	
Ms Reisenberger (FEU)		X	X	
Mr Tuckett (NIACE)		X	X	
Mr Wells (ALBSU)		X	X	Historical
Mr Croome (FEFCE)	X	X		
Ms Nickols (HEFCE)		X	X	
Mr Kershaw (DFE)		X		
Mr West (HMI)		X		
Professor Ball (King's college)		X	X	
Professor Jarvis (Surrey University)		X		
Professor Duke (Warwick University)		X	X	
Ms Thrane (FEFCE)		X	X	
<b>In Total (%)</b> (N=13)	<b>3 (12%)</b>	<b>13 (52%)</b>	<b>8 (32%)</b>	<b>1 (4%)</b>

**Note.** X : Indicates an influential factor.

As Table 7.6 shows, the Economic factor is the factor that thirteen interviewees regarded as an influential factor affecting ACE policy-making. The ratio is 52% that is over half. It seems that the Economic factor is so obvious as to be perceived as important by the majority interviewees. The Political factor follows the Economic factor, while the Learner factor is in third place. The only other factor is the historical factor, raised Mr Wells. Mr Croome made the interesting point that Learner, Economic, and Political factors overlap and can merge into an influential resource. Namely, adult learners, government and employers could shoot for a common target for economic reasons. Importantly, that interviewees in the DFE and quangos mostly emphasised how to increase adult lifetime learning was influential on the DFE's ACE policy-making. Although the significant influence of economic factors has been recognised by the majority of interviewees, most of them particularly, academics,

stressed that learner factors should have more influence. Some interviewees in the HEFCs, FEU and ALBSU mentioned that, since adult learner factors are very diverse, like their demands, it is difficult to rank their influence. These differences may come from the differences in their roles, experience and awareness.

Referring to the findings of the postal questionnaire survey and interviews in stage 2, we can see similarities and differences in the sample's responses to influential factors. The similarities are that Learner, Economic and Political factors were indicated to be the three more influential factor groups. The ostensible 'difference' is that interviewees ranked the influence of the Learner factor lower than the Economic and Political factors. This difference have been caused by the different measure approaches of the two measurements. In the questionnaire survey, items were listed for ranking. The sample's feedback was given in response to the items listed and was channelled accordingly. In the interviews, the sample answered to an open questions. They could respond directly with their own views to questions generated by the researcher. In essence, the influences of the Learner and Economic factors can overlap and merge together, for example, as with adults who learn for economic purposes. In terms of the definition, the Learner factor includes items directly relating to adult learners. As Table 7.3 shows, there are two such items: participation motivation and learning needs. These two items have the largest possibility of revealing the influence of the economy. When adult motivations and learning needs overlap with economic targets, such as for higher employment, these two items may reflect economic influences. Noteworthy, in the interviews, since there were no listed items, interviewees might link these factors together as one united Economic factor. Most importantly, this helps explaining there is an ongoing debate on the function of ACE, ie, learner-oriented or market-oriented, as Mr Tuckett and Professors Jarvis and Duke have mentioned. Even when the DFE's ACE policy-making showed a clear trend in economic targets, it still cannot ignore those voices which argue for learning rights. Adult basic education and ACE for adults with learning difficulties as listed in Schedule 2 are a few examples. Arguments have also been made that ACE is for the person not for the market (Professor Jarvis). The trend of the DFE's policy-making therefore would walk on two legs, although there is some overlap. Currently,

the market-oriented ACE policy-making seems to be much stronger; however, client-oriented advocacy is also being extended. The researcher will discuss this debate in following chapters.

## **7.4 National ACE policies**

Data about national ACE policies collected via the questionnaire survey and interviews of stage 2 were analysed. These ACE policies included ACE policies on DFE's policy agenda and policies demanded by the sample.

### **Postal questionnaire survey**

There were closed and open questions in the questionnaire on national ACE policies. Policies ranked in the closed questions were those ones that had been or supported on the DFE's policy agenda. These data were collected as signs of the sample's understanding, perceptions and experience of the DFE's national ACE policies. The open questions compelled those within the sample to express their own demanded policies. Interviewees had the opportunity to discuss the DFE's current ACE policies and their own demanded policies as well. Since we found that items of the second questionnaire, for measuring national ACE policies tended to be ranked high, the item analysis is shown in order to determine if it can support the above speculation.

### ***Frequency analysis of each item***

Each item of the four patterns of national ACE policy can be compared, based on the sample's rankings. Each item was rated from 1 to 5, the higher scores, indicating greater importance. The importance of each item is reflected by the category in which is found the highest frequency of responses and the percent of the sample that so ranked it. Table 7.7 lists the category in which the highest frequency of responses to each item is found and the percent of the sample that so ranked each item of national ACE policy.



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**Table 7.7** Analysis of each item's highest frequency and percent of national ACE policies.

Items	Not at all important	Not very important	Quite important	Very important	Extremely important
<b>Supporting service</b>					
1 offering improved advice and guidance service.			36.90	N=45	
2 offering low-charged childcare service in education institutions.			32.00	N=39	
3 broadening provision for mandatory grants and loans.			28.70	N=35	
4 improving the availability of concessionary fees.			32.20	N=39	
5 promoting statutory/voluntary collaboration in provision for adults.			43.00	N=52	
<b>Teaching process</b>					
6 disseminating experiential learning as teaching method.			38.80	N=47	
7 developing a system recognising adults' prior learning and experience.			46.70	N=57	
8 protecting equal opportunities in education for unemployed adults.			32.00	N=39	
9 reinforcing literacy and numeracy education.			35.20	N=43	
10 training adult educators.			27.90	N=34	
11 improving assessment of adults' learning.			40.20	N=49	
12 providing a free-of-charge entitlement.					22.30
					N=27
<b>Learning access</b>					
13 designing means for widening access to learning programmes.			44.30	N=54	
14 developing pathways and progression routes.			42.60	N=52	
15 enlarging personal tax reliefs to cover the expenditure on personal learning.			29.50	N=36	
<b>Provision design</b>					
16 extending the present training credit scheme.			42.10	N=51	
17 developing suitable resource formula.			36.70	N=44	
18 developing a credit accumulation and transfer framework in ACE.			46.70	N=57	

Table 7.7 shows that all of the items have been ranked as being at least quite important. Items 5, 6, 15, 16, and 18 were ranked as quite important. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 17 were rated as very important. Item 12 was the only one selected as extremely important.

In Table 7.7, we can see that, compared to Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2, the sample's rankings have a tendency to be high. All of the 18 items were ranked over the quite significant level. Specifically speaking, there were 12 items (66.67%) at the very important level and one item deemed to be extremely important. It seems the sample has over ranked these items. For

example, item 12, providing a free-of-charge entitlement was ranked as extremely important. Referring to the DFE's ACE policy agenda, we see the policy actually is not so highly regarded. The possible reason is that when the sample was asked to rank the importance of these ACE policies, they were doing so according to *their personal priorities* instead of those of the DFE. As a result, these 18 ranked ACE policies are the sample's *demands* for national ACE policies rather than those that really reflect the DFE's policy agenda. The researcher will examine this speculation via the open question which directly asked the sample to express their personal wishes for national ACE policies. If there is a large similarity between these two groups of responses, the above speculation will have been supported.

### **Directly listed national ACE policies**

There was an open question of the postal questionnaire survey allowing the sample to list their demanded national ACE policies. For comparison, these national ACE policies are listed as follows.

- 1 Making suitable accommodation available at local institutions, particularly during the 09.00-17.00 period.
- 2 Promoting the social aspects of learning. Making learning something enjoyable and fulfilling.
- 3 Improving the quality of adult education classes.
- 4 Returning to the availability of educational opportunities for all.
- 5 Increasing availability of continuing education to all when desired, whether for vocational or liberal reasons.
- 6 Reflecting local needs.
- 7 Providing for local feasibility.
- 8 Encouraging public/private sectors to provide and promote education and training.
- 9 Developing a strategy encompassing a total programme of ACE and post 16 supporting transferability of skills and leading to higher education.
- 10 Providing an entitlement to at least one year of full time education without adults suffering financial problems.

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- 11 Designing a clear reformulation of the rule establishing an entitlement to education up to 21 years of age.
- 12 Setting up national targets for adults.
- 13 Increasing DFE funded research and setting up a development 'unit'. Clearly identifying ACE as its focus.
- 14 Establishing national initiatives with funding to address national issues, eg, unemployment, adults with special needs, ethnic minorities and so on.
- 15 Developing a concept of ACE as an entity separate entity from further education, with separate recognition.
- 16 Improving the stability of funding.

The above demanded national ACE policies show a tendency forward learner-orientation. The main characteristic of learner-orientation is that the needs of adults, including current learners and potential learners, are the major priorities. The common traits of the above 16 ACE policies are directly related to adult learners from supporting services, to access, and to the improvement of provision. Adult learning rights, a liberal ACE, ACE for the disabled, local needs, funding and promotion routes are all raised. The tendency suggests that the sample's demanded national ACE policies mostly reflect adults' needs and how to encourage them to continue learning. Clearly, this tendency is different from the DFE's ACE policy agenda which was mainly focused on economic targets, except for adult basic education and ACE for adults with learning difficulties. The sample's demanded national ACE policies are not so specifically highlighted in the economic programme. A gap between the sample's and DFE's national ACE policies is obvious.

The above tendency of learner-orientation is compatible with the rankings based on the questionnaire. The questionnaire mostly emphasised those of the DFE's national ACE policies which show a real concern for adult participation and learning. As Table 7.9 lists, the 13 ACE policies that are mainly associated with Supporting services, Teaching process and Learning access were rated as very important. These policies also share the trait of learner-orientation and are directly helpful for encouraging adult to learn. This is another bit

of evidence that the results of the rankings of the DFE's ACE policies is based on the sample's own priorities instead of the DFE's. The compatibility between the rankings and the sample's responses to the open question, which asked them to give their demanded national ACE policies, support this speculation.

### **Interviewees' responses**

Interviewees also indicated their viewpoints on the DFE's current national ACE policies. The policy priorities of the DFE were to increase participation by adults in further education and to raise levels of attainment so as to meet the Lifetime Learning National Targets for Education and Training. The DFE wanted more people to go back to school. The priority was to provide ACE provision reflecting the demands of learners because the government thought that was beneficial. To sum up, the DFE's ACE policy priorities were as follows. First, the reflection of economic needs: ACE was applied as an instrument for resolving economic problems such as unemployment. Second, British competition in the global market: ACE was used to enhance the skilled workforce and prepare it for economic competition. Third, getting benefits from Europe: Britain was a member of the European Union. ACE can be employed to get resources from the Union. Finally, marketism has influenced the DFE's policies. Policies were dominated by the needs of the market, and the resources available in the market.

As to liberal adult education, it was not the DFE's policy priority and had been left to the LEAs, higher education institutions, WEA, Women's Institutes, and so on. The future of liberal adult education was uncertain. It is difficult to divide vocational from nonvocational education. For example, someone may study Japanese or GCSE courses, which can be considered as nonvocational courses yet qualify for Schedule 2.

Accordingly, the DFE's ACE policies which were helpful for achieving the economic targets had been emphasised. Improving adult lifetime learning and adult basic education were also seen as priorities of the DFE's ACE policies. Adult learning that could greatly contribute to the attainment of economic targets, whether the individual's or the whole country's, was

particularly encouraged. Most importantly, there was a link between adults' and the state's ACE economic targets. Comparatively, liberal ACE, which is supposed to contribute less to economic targets, had been more marginalised and had lost resources.

Most interviewees stressed that there should be learning opportunities for all people. ACE should be feasible. The meaning of adult education has to be redefined. Adult education is not only for qualifications or vocational skills. Some people want learning for its own sake. The direction of policy has to be changed and provision should be available in country areas. The resource distribution has to be equal, and funding providing to follow the demands. There should be an entitlement for adult learning. Employers have to continually train their staff or they should be taxed. Improving the participation of the elderly is essential because of the increase in the senior population, and so is linking general education closely to vocational education. General education cannot be ignored and it should be well connected with vocational education. Finally, the LEAs should be the main providers of ACE. The LEAs cannot lose their role in and responsibility for providing ACE.

The interviewees' personal priorities for national ACE policies also reveal a tendency toward learner-orientation. Most of the demanded ACE policies interviewees raised are related to the value of learning to satisfy adults' different needs. ACE can have multiple functions. Economic functions should not be the sole functions of ACE. As Professor Jarvis stressed, 'education is for being not only for having'. There are adults who do not wish to learn for practical purposes. The government cannot overlook this demand. Accordingly, we can also see there is a gap between the DFE's and interviewees' ACE policy agenda. The DFE's ACE policy agenda had been listed mostly in Schedule 2 of the 1992 FHEA. Those funded courses can be grouped as: qualifying courses, vocational courses and adult basic education. The interviewees' ACE policy agenda is based on their individual priorities. It shows a diverse picture. Table 7.8 compares the differences in the ACE policy agendas of the DFE and the interviewees.

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**Table 7.8** Comparison between the DFE and interviewees' ACE policy agendas

The DFE's ACE policy agenda	Interviewees' ACE policy agenda
1 Qualifying courses	1 Adequate and equal learning opportunity
2 vocational courses	2 Adequate and equal learning access
3 adult basic education	3 Learning for its own sake
	4 Entitlement for adult learning
	5 Employers' responsibility for training
	6 Education for the aged and disabled
	7 Connecting general and vocational education
	8 LEAs as the major providers
	9 Adult basic education
	10 Meeting adult demands via funding
	11 Encouraging ACE providers via funding
	12 Increasing participation rate and intention rate

As Table 7.8 shows, the DFE's ACE policy agenda was quite straight forward, compared with the interviewees' policy agenda, which contains diverse policies. On the interviewees' individual ACE policy agenda, except for Mr Wells's stress on adult basic education which is also a DFE focus, most points relate to adult learners directly, for instance, points 1, 2, 3, 6 and 10. Points 4 and 7 are about the design of provision. Points 5, 8 and 11 regard the providers of ACE. The majority viewpoints suggest that most interviewees were concerned with those ACE policies which directly help adult learners.

Linking the findings of the postal questionnaire survey and the interviews, we see that the sample's demanded national ACE policies are much more concerned with adults' right to lifetime learning. They emphasise that ACE cannot be limited to practical economic targets. ACE needs a clarification of its concept and a function broad enough to include many dimensions than the economic one. The DFE was expected to protect the learning rights of the disadvantaged and those who are learning for reasons other than economical through more adult basic education and stable funding. Although adult basic education and ACE for adults with learning difficulties were on the DFE's policy agenda, its clear tendency toward market-orientation was a long way from learner-orientation. The market-orientation shows the needs of labour, the economy, consumer markets. The needs of different markets are not necessarily identical those of with adult learner. In contrast, learner-orientation reflects the needs of adults. Although the chief difficulty of adults' needs and demands is that they are very diverse and difficultly assessed, they cannot be ignored just because of this difficulty. Thus, there is a gap between the DFE's current national ACE policies and those demanded

by informed individuals. To meet the demands of ACE's target group, the central government has challenging task ahead of it, if it wishes to bridge this gap via its policy-making.

### **7.5 Comparison of the five factor interpretation of national ACE policies**

According to the hypothesised relationship, current national ACE policies were formulated by national ACE policy-makers under the influences of varied factors. Whether the five factor groups-Educational, Economic, Social, Learner, and Political factors could be ranked on the basis of their interpretation of national ACE policies was an interesting question. In order to explore this further, Multiple Stepwise Regression was employed. In this analysis, four factors were utilised as predictive variables with the whole current ACE policy as the criterion variable. Multiple Stepwise Regression was applied to rank the power of this five factor interpretation of the variance of national ACE policies.

#### **Examination of Multicollinearity**

Before conducting Regression, we have to examine the possible Multicollinearity. Briefly, the problematic existence of high intercorrelations among varied independent variables is called the problem of 'Multicollinearity' (Edward, 1979, p. 65). The reason why Multicollinearity has raised here is that high intercorrelations among the independent variables will affect the accuracy of the predictions. High intercorrelations among independent variables suggest that there is a lot of overlap among them so the individual predictive ability of any one of them will contaminate the other variables. But there is no agreement as to what 'high' correlations among predictive variables means. Still others speak of different degrees of Multicollinearity (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 233). Generally speaking, the relationship among independent variables under the absolute value of .50 is seen as being free from Multicollinearity.

Referring to the correlations, we see that the  $r$  values for the five factors range from .185 (Learner and Political factors) to .489 (Educational and Social factors). The correlations are not high enough for us to need to worry about the problem of Multicollinearity. In addition, as Pedhazur (1982, p. 246) indicates, high Multicollinearity does not pose difficulties when

the researcher's sole purpose is the determination and interpretation of  $R^2$ , an indicator of the interpretation of predictive variables. Since the main purpose of analysis here was to determine and interpret the  $R^2$ , the problem of Multicollinearity is of no concern to us. Besides, Pedhazur also points out that one of the proposed remedies is the collection of additional data in the hope that this may ameliorate the condition of high Multicollinearity (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 246). Multiple Stepwise Regression was only one of the methods used in this research. Our results will be further examined in the light of other sources of data. Thus, Multicollinearity can be ignored here.

### The results of Multiple Stepwise Regression

The five influential factors were fed into the Multiple Stepwise Regression process to predict current national ACE policies. The results are listed in Table 7.9.

**Table 7.9** The result of Multiple Stepwise Regression of influential factor on national ACE policies.

Variables	Multi R	R	B	Beta	F	Signif F
Learner factor	.601	.361	2.026	.512	67.84	.000
Educational factor	.623	.389	.811	.188	37.80	.000
Constant			24.456			

The results of the Multiple Stepwise Regression analysis of our five factor interpretation of national ACE policies showed that only the Learner and Educational factors were powerful enough to enter the Regression model. The significance of F for all was over .001 level. The Economic, Social, and Political factors were excluded owing to their lack of interpretative ability. The Learner factor entered the model first. In Table 7.9, we see that Multiple  $R=.601$ , and the larger the value, the greater the interpretative ability. This is the indicator that shows how many variances of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable. Accordingly, we know that the Learner factor can explain the variance of national ACE policies up to .361, ie, 36.10%. Both B and Beta are indicators of the independent variable's influence. The larger value, the greater the importance. The Beta is the standardised coefficient in the regression equation. The Beta of the Learner factor was .512. The Educational factor was the second and the last variable to enter the regression model. In



Table 7.9, we find that the weight of the Educational factor only increased Multiple R by .022 and  $R^2$  by .02 (2.70%). The contribution of the Educational factor toward explaining national ACE policies was small. The Educational factor's Beta was .188, also showing that its influence was far less important than the Learner factor.

The findings of Multiple Stepwise Regression disclosed that the Learner factor was the prime factor capable of interpreting national ACE policies, followed by the Educational factor. Both the Learner and Educational factors can explain the variance of national ACE policies up to 38.85%. Other influential factors: Economic, Social, and Political factors did not qualify for this regression model. Yet, these findings need to be integrated with our previous results for a complete exploration and interpretation.

The above findings again imply that the sample's ranking of the current DFE's ACE policies is based on their personal priorities rather than their consideration of the DFE's priorities. As discussed before, the sample's demanded national ACE policies are learner-oriented. How to meet adult demands on learning is their major policy priority. Since the questionnaire has been ranked based on their personal priorities, we are not surprised that the results of Multiple Stepwise Regression show the greatest interpretative ability lies in the Learner factor. Isolation of the trait of learner-orientation in the ranked ACE policies resulted from this finding. In addition, although the Learner factor has been rated as largely influential on the DFE's current ACE policy-making, its influence is quite similar to that of the Economic factor. Thus, we are not saying that the Learner factor has absolutely surpassed the Economic factor in our interpretation of the DFE's national ACE policies. The reasonable fact is the results obtained when those ACE policies have been ranked according to the sample's demands. After linking to the previous high-ranking tendency, the similarity between the rankings and the responses to the open questions, and the findings of the Regression process, the researcher must judge that the questionnaire used to rank the DFE's ACE policy priority has been answered according to the sample's policy priorities. The results reflect their demands on national ACE policies. Therefore, the data collected through this questionnaire will not be further used or analysed.

## **7.6 Comparison of the different samples' rankings**

There were different subsamples for the postal questionnaire survey and interview. Especially noteworthy, in the questionnaire survey, the sample was classified according to demographic variables, such as gender, age, occupation, and place of residence. Interviewees also played different roles in relation to ACE. The different samples ranked differently the items of the influential factors and national ACE policies. To compare the potential differences was one of the research purposes. The different samples' rankings of influential factors will be analysed according to their demographic variables and discussed together with the interview materials. Since the questionnaire used to rank the DFE's priorities in national ACE policies was answered based on the sample's priorities, it cannot be used to assess their consideration of the DFE's priorities. Therefore this part of the comparison will be relinquished. In the analysis of the different sample's rankings of influential factors, their demographic variables are independent variables and the five influential factors are dependant variables. The MANOVA was used to compare the sample's rankings of the five factors. The ANOVA and T test were employed for further comparison of the variables to see if they achieved at least the .05 significance level for the MANOVA.

Table 7.10 concludes the results of the comparison of the different sample's rankings of the influential factors.

## Chapter 7 Analysis of Empirical Data

**Table 7.10** The different samples' rankings of the influential factors.

Groups	Five influential factors		
	Wilks	F	Post comparison
<i>gender</i>	.970	.722	
1 M			
2 F			
<i>age</i>	.943	.439	
1 18-24			
2 25-34			
3 35-44			
4 45-54			
5 55-64			
6 65+			
<i>occupations</i>	.896	.859	
1 LEA administrator			
2 HE lecturer			
3 PO leader			
4 Adult educators			
<i>places of residence</i>	.815	1.605*	Learner factor
1 London			G1(16.040)>G3(13.882)
2 Metropolitan			G1(16.040)>G4(10.800)
3 county			
4 Wales			

\*  $P < .05$

As Table 7.10 shows, only one significant difference was found in the Learner factor. Samples living in London ranked the influence of the Learner factor higher than those who lived in the English counties and Wales. Their mean is obviously higher than that of the other two groups. This reveals that people living in London have a different perception of the influence of the Learner factor on national ACE policy-making, compared with people living in the English counties and Wales. The possible reasons for these the difference will be explored in the next chapter.

## **Summary**

The analyses of empirical data have revealed significant findings. The CFA confirmed the classification of Educational, Economic, Social, Learner, and Political factors. The Learner factor was ranked as a major influential factor, closely followed by the Economic factor and there was a link between the influence the Learner and Economic factors. The Learner factor was the chief factor used to interpret the largest variances of the demanded national ACE policies because those ACE policies were based on the sample's priorities. The sample's responses in the postal questionnaires and interviews were analysed. Accordingly, the DFE's ACE policy agenda was aimed at Britain's economic competitiveness; adult basic education and adult participation in lifetime learning are also emphasised. There is a gap between the DFE's national ACE policies and the sample's demanded ones that needs to be bridged. Among the subsamples with diverse demographic variables, the differences in their assessment of the five influential factors were explored. One significant relationship was found. Those findings have provided important points for the following discussion.

## **Part 3**

### **CONCLUDING: THE WAY TO GO**

Part 3 presents the conclusion of this research. In this Part, the findings of the literature review and empirical data will be discussed. Based on these findings, the researcher will make suggestions to relevant organisations and individuals to reveal the direction in which the practices and studies of ACE policy-making in England and Wales seem to point.

Part 3 contains two chapters:

Chapter 8 Discussion of the findings;

Chapter 9 Conclusions and suggestions.

## **Chapter 8**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The profile of changing ACE in England and Wales seems to become more clear after linking to the literature review and empirical data of the questionnaire surveys and interviews. Ranked factors which could have influences on national ACE policy-making and the sample's ranking and demands of national ACE policies have been explored. Different people's perceptions and opinions on influential factors and national ACE policies could not be identical. The possible reasons behind these findings would further give us significant information for understanding national ACE policy-making in England and Wales.

This chapter discusses the findings in this research. Hypotheses raised in chapter 6 are also tested one by one, according to the analytical framework and empirical data to examine if each hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The researcher then interprets the possible reasons of the results.

This chapter contains the following four sections:

- 8.1 Demanded national ACE policies;
- 8.2 Policy-making in the DFE;
- 8.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making;
- 8.4 Tests on the hypotheses.

#### **8.1 Demanded national ACE policies**

It is interesting to show the feature of the DFE's ACE policies and people's demands of national ACE policies when ACE is in change. In this research, the DFE's ACE policies were collected from the government's documents, policy proposals and the sample's perceptions at stage 1. The collected ACE policies then were examined via the empirical data at stage 2. The sample were asked to rank the DFE's policy priorities and supplemented their personal policy demands. Although the formation of a clear picture of the DFE's ACE policies is helpful, to simplify the diverse ACE policies is difficult. Additionally, the sample's ranking

through their perceptions and judgements may have a gap between the DFE's real policy practices. This research's findings do suggest the above difficulty.

### **The misunderstanding of the second questionnaire's instruction**

As chapter 7 has discussed, the questionnaire for ranking the DFE's policy priorities was responded by the sample according to their personal policy priorities. The result is the sample's demands of national ACE policies rather than the DFE's ACE policy priorities. It cannot be analysed as the 'real picture' of the DFE's ACE policy priorities. The possible reasons why the sample misunderstood the instruction may be discussed as follows. In addition that the instruction is not clear and specific enough, the possible cause is, firstly, that the sample have a strong demand of national ACE policies, especially when they got the first opportunity to rank 20 specific ACE policies. Secondly, the sample are all people who have a direct relationship with ACE. They are in this field and may always have a concern on it. When they were asked to rank, they intended to have a higher emphasis, as the result showed. It means that in their minds, those ACE policies already have a significant position.

The other possible reason is the limitation of the questionnaire survey. In the questionnaire survey, the sample responded to the items listed. They were negative responders. The items on the questionnaire restricted the range of their answer. Their responses only reflected their perceptions and judgements 'on the items'. In this research, the researcher wanted to get the DFE's ACE policy priorities through the sample's ranking. This purpose might be lost because the questionnaire was merely able to get indirect information and the sample's perceptions and judgements might have a gap with the DFE's real policy priorities. When, basically, these policy items were important in characteristic, the tendency of the sample's high ranking was reinforced. An open questionnaire, as the one in the questionnaire, might avoid the possible misunderstanding and achieve the research purposes. This is the limitation of the questionnaire survey and it also suggests that multiple approaches of data collection would be much more helpful than only one.

**There is a gap between the DFE's and people's ACE policy priorities.**

There are similarities and differences between the DFE's and people's ACE policy priorities. Both the sample of the questionnaire survey and interviews pointed out the demands of learner-oriented national ACE policies. The result of Regression also showed the above trend. Interviewees' responses also stressed the significance of learner-oriented ACE policies. National ACE policies were seen as not only for the economic targets but for more other purposes such as psychological needs of adults. In contrast, the DFE's ACE policy priorities were much more market-oriented. Economic targets have become the guidelines of the DFE's ACE policy agenda. Although adult basic education and ACE for the disadvantaged with learning difficulties are the common policy priorities of the DFE and the majority sample, the gap between the DFE's and people's ACE policy priorities is quite clear.

Is the gap normal in terms of ACE policy? Is the gap meaningful for the DFE? Referring to the historical review, we can find that there was a gap between the central government's policy priorities and the policy priorities listed in the 1919 Report and the Russell Report. Especially, when liberal ACE was highlighted in the Russell Report, ironically, the DFE's ACE policy priorities had gradually changed to vocational ACE. As a consequence, the Russell Report was described as having an antique air (Evans, 1987). When there have been 69% adults studying in further education colleges, compared with 30% 16-18 age group in 1995, the DFE still cannot see further education college as the adult education sectors (Tuckett, 1996). It seems that the gap usually happens between the DFE and the public. Although adults' demands are too diverse to clarify (Mr Kirshaw, Ms Melville; Mr Croome; Professor Ball) and there is little research upon the result of adults' participation that would influence their demands (Mr Wells), adults' demands cannot be ignored in terms of the DFE's ACE policy-making. Although adults' demands may not be rational eg lack of rational consideration of personal career development and not be beneficial to the economy eg liberal ACE, their demands may represent the claim of learning right. Since ACE policy is public policy, the public's welfare should be the priority of policy. Therefore, the gap cannot be seen as normal and ignored. The gap is meaningful for the DFE when it makes ACE policy.



There is a debate between different ideas behind the gap. For example, the social welfare model and the market model. ACE cannot be limited to the market function or the social welfare function. ACE needs a broad perspective in functions. The DFE was demanded to widen its viewpoint of the function of ACE. At least at present, the market-oriented ACE policy has suffered criticism. But, the function of ACE is not the issue of yes or no. The two-side judgement of the ACE's function will be in the danger of over simplification. How to walk in the middle and fulfil a wider function for ACE to balance the demands of people and itself would be the tough task for the DFE. A national ACE policy which can meet the needs of the most clients no matter individuals, groups or organisations can be seen as an ideal policy. For achieving this target, the DFE needed a detailed and scientific assessment of adults' demands and the requirements of society and the state before making ACE policy.

## **8.2 Policy-making in the DFE**

In terms of national ACE policy-making, the DFE had become the major policy-maker. Linking to the literature review and interview materials, we can see its increase of power and intervention of role. From the 1919 Report to the 1992 FHEA, the power of policy-making in ACE has gradually transferred from the LEAs to the DFE. The DFE had increased its power and reinforced its role in ACE policy-making directly or through new quangos such as the FEFCs and HEFCs. This trend of centralisation of the DFE's power in education as a whole had been indicated (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Fieldhouse, 1996; Kogan, 1987; Sullivan, 1992; White and Crump, 1993). ACE became an important policy issue in the 1970s and 80s. It was increasingly shaped by government actions and policies and by a progressive decline in public expenditure on education. ACE was used to contribute to the creation of a culture of enterprise, competitiveness, and individualism; for specific aims such as the disadvantaged and vocationalism (Fieldhouse, 1996). We know that the DFE's centralisation of power was against the common trend in some European countries (Weiss, 1993), but it is still too early and difficult to say whether this trend is helpful or harmful to ACE policy-making. However, a clear sign is that the DFE's national ACE policy-making was getting more significant and complex via its possible interaction with quangos, other relevant organisations and individuals.

### **The complex process of the DFE's ACE policy-making**

The complex process of the DFE's ACE policy-making mainly resulted from the characteristics of policy and involvement of potential policy-makers. As Mr Kershaw in the DFE indicated, different policies may have different processes. The process mostly depends on the level of policy and the significance of policy. It is therefore difficult to get a specific process via simplification or generalisation. This is the characteristic of complexity of policy analysis, as Mann (1975) argued. Particularly, after the involvement of more potential policy-makers, the DFE's ACE policy-making might increase its complexity. These potential ACE policy-makers might cover quangos, professional organisations and other groups. In ACE, FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE, and ALBSU had a comparatively greater involvement in the DFE's ACE policy-making. But the complicated issues were what their individual positions were and how their individual influences were in the policy process. As discussed previously, we found that quangos like FEFCs and HEFCs have increased their influence in the DFE's ACE policy-making through various consultation and recommendations after their assessment on ACE sectors. Advisory bodies like the previous FEU might present their advice directly to the DFE via meetings and research papers. Professional organisations like the NIACE and ALBSU might extend their influences via lobbying, consultation, advice and recommendations. Above different potential partners might have different positions in the DFE's ACE policy-making because of their characteristics and role playing. Quangos had the least room to have their own policy, as Mr Kershaw and Mr Kirwen said, and few radical suggestions, but professional organisations had the duty to pass their members' diverse voices. The latter may be much more radical and aggressive, as the NIACE plays. The current literature upon the DFE's policy-making is pretty insufficient and especially, it needs much more research upon the relationship between the DFE and its potential partners. Though the process of the DFE's policy-making was not the major topic in this research and the information that this research has provided is still limited, the findings here may reveal valuable points for further analyses.

The complex process of the DFE's ACE policy-making also implies that different approaches for studying its policy-making are necessary. As analysed in chapter 4, in British limited

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research upon educational policy-making, four chief approaches are: (1) examining the relationship between politics and educational policy-making; (2) studying the role of the state in educational policy-making; (3) exploring the role of pressure groups in educational policy-making and (4) systems analysis of educational policy-making. Different approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. If researchers can apply different approaches together in studying the DFE's policy-making, more information can be explored. For example, system analysis can make the inner and outer context of the DFE's policy-making clearer, exploring the role of pressure groups is helpful to clarify the part of NIACE or ALBSU, and studying the role of the state can disclose the influence of other government's departments. The link of above four different approaches can produce more useful findings about the DFE's ACE policy-making. It also means that the rational tendency of policy analysis which divides the process of policy-making into different phases, as Weaver employed (1979), is not sufficient, especially, when the researchers want to get a micro understanding. System analysis was applied in this research because of the research problems and purposes. However, in terms of the DFE's ACE policy-making, the stage of throughput ie black box is still not clear enough. Although to explore the throughput was not the main purpose of this research, the limited information may influence the whole understanding of the DFE's ACE policy-making. Therefore, a multiple-oriented approach for studying the DFE's policy-making would be suggested.

#### **The insufficient participation in the DFE's ACE policy-making**

Basically, the DFE's policy-making was described as a pluralist process (Fenwick and McBride, 1981; Hall et al, 1975; Richardson and Jordon, 1979). Mr Kirwan and Mr Kershaw at the Further Education Branch showed that ministers did consult with their colleagues in other departments and leaders of major professional organisations through regular and informal meetings. Involvement in policy-making was also one part of officers' work. Both Mr Tuckett and Mr Wells indicated that they had many opportunities to take part in the DFE's ACE policy-making. Ms Reisenberger at the FEU and Ms Nickoles in the HEFC also said that the chairpersons and senior officers of their institutions were usually involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making. However, Mr Kershaw noted that to involve more outsiders

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in the DFE's policy-making was not welcome by the ministers. Though Professor Duke pointed out four paths that academics could apply to affect the DFE's policy-making, Professors Ball and Jarvis and Mr Kershaw all mentioned that academics had less opportunities to participate in the DFE's policy-making. Therefore, as Mr Tuckett noted, some policies were not formed through a pluralist process. He and Mr Wells stressed that they hope the DFE could open its door to more outsiders.

The findings show that there are different interpretations of the DFE's involvement of outsiders in ACE policy-making. Although the DFE's policy-making involved a process of consultation, it is still difficult to say that it is a pluralist style. The major cause is the ambiguous definition of the pluralism. Pluralism implies that a process of competing interests between different groups is necessary and helpful in modern democratic society ( see Kogan, 1975; McNay and Ozga, 1985). But a clear definition and its criterion of a pluralist process are still not formed. Thus, it is not easy to draw the line between open discussion, formal consultation, general meetings, power sharing and duty sharing in the DFE's policy-making. A pluralist process in policy-making has to be assessed via its superficial and essential conditions. For example, various open discussions, consultations and meetings are all superficial conditions of a pluralist process. Power and duty sharings are all essential conditions and are much more crucial. A real pluralist process in policy-making has to include at least above superficial and essential conditions. As analysed in chapter 7, the DFE did have open discussion, consultation and meetings inside and outside the Department with relevant partners in its ACE policy-making. It seems that the DFE already had the superficial conditions of a pluralist process. However, the feature of power and duty sharings were still not clear in the DFE's policy-making. Namely, whether the DFE had the essential conditions of a pluralist process needs to be further examined. As Mr Tuckett said, having opportunity to be involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making was quite different from having influence in it. In terms of superficial conditions of a pluralist process, ministers in the DFE were glad to open their doors but they might be less interested in sharing power and duty with outsiders because the latter was much more complicated to deal with, as Mr Kirshaw noted. Since the interviewees might apply different conditions in

assessing the DFE's ACE policy-making, they had different comments on its process in terms of the idea of pluralism.

As a sort of public policy, ACE policy-making comparatively requires a pluralist process. There are two reasons here. First, public policy has a closed relationship with the public. The content of ACE policy may directly influence its target group ie adults. It is comparatively necessary for the DFE to listen to the voices of adults themselves or the organisations that represent different groups of adults. To achieve this aim, the DFE required a pluralist process. It was also one of the responsibilities of the DFE to provide this democratic process of policy-making. Second, to establish a partnership to serve ACE is not only the tradition of ACE (Jennings, 1985; Kelly, 1992) but one of the DFE's major policies (Boswell, 1993; NIACE, 1994a). The partnership in ACE cannot be merely restricted in offering provision but has to cover the sharing of power and duty in policy-making. When stressing the establishment of partnership, the DFE has to share its power and duty in ACE policy-making with its partners such as the LEAs, voluntary sectors, professional groups and so forth. Therefore, the DFE had been expected to open its door widely to relevant outsiders for a sufficient participation in ACE policy-making.

### **8.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

As the historical review has shown, ACE in England and Wales is in change. There have been many different influential resources affecting the change. The researcher concluded five groups of factors to represent the major influences and applied the empirical data to confirm that. It is difficult to simplify the complicated influential determinants in the long time range from 1900 to 1996 into specific factor groups. However, this process can be helpful to explore the strives which have resulted in the change of ACE.

#### **Learner and Economic factors mainly affecting national ACE policy-making**

Five factor groups: Learner, Economic, Political, Social, and Educational factors were confirmed. Learner and Economic factors are the major influential factors affecting national ACE policy-making. Although the Learner factor was ranked in the first place, the Economic

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factor's actual impact cannot be ignored. A great deal of evidence has revealed the trend of economism of national ACE from the 1970s to the 1994 White Paper. Economic regeneration and the purpose of improving Britain's competitiveness are the obvious targets. The Economic factor was raised by most interviewees as a significant influential factor. The economic factor covers British competitiveness (Mr Kirwan, Mr Kershaw, Ms Nickoles, Mr Tuckett, Mr Wells, Mr Croome, Ms Thrane, Professors Ball and Duke) and the labour market, which includes the needs of employers and employees (Ms Melville, Ms Reisenberger and Professor Jarvis). But, the growing emphasis on lifelong learning also shows the strong influence of the Learner factor. From the White Paper of European Lifelong Learning Year to the recent Green Paper of the new Labour Government, that learning is for everyone is becoming the consensus of policy-makers and those who are concerned about this issue. The situation implies that both the Learner and Economic factors are all influential and there is a possibility of interaction between these two factors. As to the political factor, it was just behind the Economic factor. The political party in power is the main influence resource, compared with the opposition parties, on national policy-making. Its ideologies could be reflected on policy-making. Social and Educational factors were comparatively less influential on national ACE policy-making. Social class and social change did not obviously affect national ACE policy-making. The educational factor, above all the need for liberal education and the ACE trend in the world, was less important. The decline of liberal education mostly resulted from the economism and vocationalism. The trend in the world was not quickly learned by national policy-makers because the DFE's passive idea of planning was more likely focused on the existing trend instead of the future. On the whole, Learner and Economic factors are the major factors affecting the DFE's ACE policy-making, followed by the Political factor.

#### **Interaction between influential factors**

Learner and Economic factors were the major factors affecting the DFE's ACE policy-making; however, interaction between factors has also been found. The interaction is quite clear between the Learner and Economic factors. Learner factor was comparatively highly ranked by the postal questionnaire survey's sample but the Economic factor was much more

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highly ranked by the interviewees at second stage. In addition to the reason of difference in questioning, the major cause is that there is interaction between the Learner and Economic factors. When adults learn for economic targets, the Learner factor may become the Economic factor because of their stress on economic purposes of ACE. For example, when the majority adults are learning for promoting their vocational skills for employment, in terms of adult learners, it is a learners' factor that might affect the DFE's ACE policy-making. However, when the DFE strived to upgrade the British competitiveness via increasing vocational ACE for adults, it can be seen as an economic factor. Thus, the DFE's ACE policy-making was in essence influenced by the Learner and Economic factors. Referring to the findings in this research, we can see that the economic orientation of ACE policy-making was pushed by the DFE and adults themselves. As the Schedule 2 has listed, those funded courses are seen to be helpful for adults and for the country.

The interaction also implies the difficulty in classifying influential factors. Five supposed factors were developed from the literature review and interview materials at stage 1. They were then confirmed by the CFA. Although to simplify complex influential resources into specific factors is a common research approach in ACE (for instance, Crisp, 1991; Duke, 1994; Hall, 1985; Tuijman, 1996), in this research, the large time range makes this classification become complicated. The above examples of research were mostly according to a subjective classification and lacked an empirical examination. So this research can be seen as one of the limited studies that is intended to have an objective examination of simplification of influential resources. But after the empirical examination, we can see the difficulty in classifying influential factors. Though the CFA in this research confirmed the proposed classification, the interaction between the Learner and Economic factors also implies that it is difficult to classify factors affecting the DFE's ACE policy-making. Besides the Learner and Economic factors, the Political factor may also interact with other factors and not easy to be grouped. In terms of the DFE's ACE policy-making, its economic targets of ACE might be based on the ideologies of the political Party in power. In this case, it is difficult to judge if the influence is political or economic. The approach used in this research is similar to the Boshier's research upon the participation motivations. Boshier (1991) also

applied Factor Analysis to explore the structure of collected 42 items and then classified them into 7 groups of participation motivation. The difference between this research and Boshier's (1991) also suggests that research upon policy-making is much more difficult than upon participation motivation that is directly associated with individual adults instead of the complex economic, political and social dimensions.

## **8.4 Tests on the hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1. Factors affecting national ACE policy-making can be classified into five groups.**

This hypothesis is *accepted*. As Table 7.3 lists, the result of CFA suggested that there were five factors: Educational, Economic, Social, Learner and Political factors. The five factors could explain the total variance of influential factors up to 55.50%. There was one item deleted in each proposed factor group. So each confirmed factor had 4 items instead of 5. Five confirmed factors could match the original classification with high validity and reliability.

The confirmation of these five factor groups provides evidence that the proposed classification of factors affecting national ACE policy-making could be supported by the sample's ranking. Those five factors were developed from the literature review, interviews, and the questionnaire survey at stage 1. The sample's responses support that in practice these five factors could affect national ACE policy-making in different degree. These influential factors from the environment inside and outside the DFE could be divided into five dimensions. These five dimensions have widely encompassed the varying influence resources on national ACE policy-making. This structure is quite coherent with the one of NIACE(1990), which listed social, economic and demographic factors to explain the development of ACE.

### ***Learner factor***

About the different extent of each factor's importance, as Table 7.4 shows, Learner factor is the highest one, closely followed by the Economic factor. According to the means, the order



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is Learner factor (14.285) > Economic factor (13.073) > Political factor (12.532) > Social factor (10.944) > Educational factor (9.629). The link of influence between the Learner and Economic factors is obvious. To sum up, Learner, Economic, and Political factors can be seen as the three main factors which could affect the DFE's ACE policy-making.

Factors such as adults' participation motivation, adults' demands for literacy and numeracy education, the diversity of adult learning needs, and adults' economic ability to pay the fees are ranked as major factors affecting national ACE policy-making. As the previous Minister of State, Tim Boswell (1993) stressed, the value and diversity of adult education include improving adult participation, and extending the learning community. In the responses to National Commission on Education (1994), the DFE emphasised that the Government's aim is to increase participation by young people and adults in high quality education and training. The Conservative Government's expenditure plans for education gave top priority to further education. Increased funding would allow for a 25% increase in student numbers in further education over the next three years. Adult basic education has been emphasised in the 1992 FHEA and has increased its importance. Factors especially regarding adult participation and adult basic education could not only affect national ACE policy-making but be pushed by the continuing demands outside the DFE. In terms of 'adult' continuing education, adult learners are supposed to be the first target group rather than the government's political objectives or employers' requirements. Two interviewees at stage 2, Mr Kirwan and Mr Kershaw at Further Education Branch and Mr Croome at the FEFCE, also indicated that the DFE was sensitive to adults' needs and demands and wanted to increase adults' participation in lifetime learning. But the challenge is that adults' demands are very diverse (Ms Reisenberger, Mr Wells, Ms Nickols and Professor Ball). The DFE needed to keep a close eye on adults' diverse demands and listed the priorities via continuing assessment. Updated surveys concerning the practice of ACE are significant for the assessment of adults' demands, for example, Tuckett and Sargant (1996). The findings can be referred to get into the real world and become the basis of policy proposal.

***Economic factor***

The influence of the Economic factor cannot be ignored. Though the Economic factor was ranked as the second influential factor by the sample of the postal questionnaire survey, it closely followed the Learner factor and was clearly shown by most interviewees. Linking to the different data resources, the researcher would say the Economic and Learner factors are major influential determinants and there is interaction between them and a debate on the ACE's orientation of learner-orientedness or market-orientedness. Three items, demands from employers for a skilful workforce, funding supports from enterprises, and the quality of manpower in the labour market were all ranked as quite important. The result provides us with at least two marked points. First, ACE policy-making could be rather market-oriented. As the literature review has shown, especially after the 1970s, British ACE policy has obviously been dominated by vocationalism or in Tuijnman's term (1992), economism. Vocational ACE provision has become the mainstream. Courses for qualifications and employment have got popular in a variety of sectors, not only because of adult learners' actual needs, but because of the DFE's encouragement and its policy orientation. NETTs and that Schedule 2 of the 1992 FHEA directly listed courses for qualifications and vocational targets as main focuses both have disclosed the distinctive trend. As Table 7.6 summarised, interviewees at stage 2 mostly showed the DFE's target for enriching British economic competitiveness. They were Mr Kirwan, Mr Kershaw, Mr Tuckett, Mr Wells, Mr Croome, Mr West, Ms Thrane, Professor Ball, Jarvis and Duke. The White Paper published by the Department of Trade and Industry in May 1994, was named 'Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win'. To work with business and trade unions to support and develop skills in the workplace, including improved provision for small firms and to enrich employability and competitiveness through giving people skills for the modern labour market are all the focuses in the Green Paper of the new Labour Government (DfEE, 1998; Fryer, 1998). Therefore, although the political party in power has changed, the economic purposes of ACE and lifelong learning are not so different. ACE has been empowered with the responsibility for reinforcing the quality of workforce to help and serve the business. Ms Melville in Birkbeck College also commented that economism was a strong ideology which had an impact on the DFE's policy-making.

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Employers in industry and business have played a vital part in national ACE policy-making. As Ball (1990) observed, it is now normal for the government to nominate representatives of industry to key committees and decision-making and allocatory bodies concerned with education. Another obvious indicator showing employers' involvement in this field is that the formulation of NETTs included a host of employers' opinions. Those targets mostly reflected the demands of employers but less of the DFE's educational goals and adult's needs. It signifies a strong tendency towards the market orientation. Interviewees at stage 2, Ms Melville, Ms Reinsenberger, Ms Thrane, Professor Ball, Jarvis and Duke also pointed out the influence of the labour market including employers' and employees' needs. Further, taking the members of the FEFC for England for example, in 1996, there were 3 employers among the 15 members. The ratio was 1/5. Its chairman, Mr Robert Gunn was the former chairman of the Boots Company plc. As the Education Secretary stressed, the composition of FEFCs and its regional committees would include strong industrial, commercial, and professional involvement, as well as members with an educational background (FEFC, 1992). Those facts clearly show that employers have played a significant role in the main ACE policy bodies.

One economic factor was rated as very important: the national economic condition for providing ACE. Nearly one half of the sample ranked it as very important (47.50%, N=57). Economy is the elemental and crucial basis of education investment. Above all, ACE, which is not compulsory education or formal school education, is much more likely to be impacted by the economic condition. For instance, during the years of economic abundance, the 1960s, ACE might satisfy people's needs. Respectively, during economic recession, the 1930s and the 1970s, it was usually the first target to be deprived of resources. This is the reason why Carr-Hill (1990) found that the second-class status of adult education was reinforced by the recession in 13 countries. The finding also shows that the influence of the Economic factor on ACE is not confined to Britain. It is a common fact throughout the world. Economic condition is reflected on the government's budgets. From Tables 3.5 and 3.6, we know that central and local governments' investments in ACE are limited. From 1982 to 1993, the average of central government's expenditure on adult education and grants to local

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authorities was about .00622%. From 1979 to 1993, the average of local authority current expenditure on adult education in England was about .0079%. The limited expenditure had caused ACE to be described as 'Cinderella'. This is the major reason why the national economic condition was rated as the most important factor in the four factors considered.

#### ***Political factor***

Political factor is ranked in the third place. Two items were ranked as quite important: demands from professional organisations (52.40%, N=65), and influences of civil servants (41.50%, N=51). The item, demands from professional organisations, has had an over 50% emphasis. According to the majority, demands from professional organisations play a quite significant role in national ACE policy-making. As discussed in chapter 5, basically, policy-makers in the DFE saw themselves as adopting a pluralist process for policy formation. Relevant key professional organisations had opportunities to be involved in policy-making, in particular during the policy formulation stage. In terms of ACE, NIACE and ALBSU were the two chief professional organisations. Mr Kirwan and Mr Kershaw also mentioned that the directors of NIACE, and ALBSU, Association of LEAs, and other relevant organisations were usually invited to take part in important policy-making. It was usual for the Ministers to consult with leaders of the main professional organisations. Mr Tuckett at NIACE and Mr Wells at ALBSU did reveal that they had many opportunities to join in the DFE's ACE policy-making and actively conducted their influences. Some organisations expressed their demands via the political lobbying. Mr Tuckett stressed that NIACE kept a close relationship with MPs and invited them to consider and support the NIACE's suggestions. Once MPs were involved in the lobbying, the topic argued could increase the extent of debate in the House of Common or its committees. Then, its influences on the DFE's ACE policy-making could grow as well.

The influence of civil servants was seen as an important political factor and got about 42.00% majority opinion. As reviewed in chapter 5, except in the stage of determination of policy, which is always the work of the Secretary for Education or Ministers. Civil servants are actually in charge of a large part of policy-making, above all in analysing problems, plans

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and priorities, and formulation of policy. Mr Kirwan noted that this is a main part of the civil servants' jobs. Mr Kershaw stressed that we cannot overlook the influences of civil servants. They are there and work. He said both junior and senior civil servants could have direct influences in ACE policy-making. It is a normal process in the modern administration that policy proposals originate from responsible officials and then through modification at different levels' or through group interaction become more complete. Finally, they developed into several options for further determination. Therefore the basic ideas of policy proposals may come from responsible civil servants. In this process of policy-making, civil servants' influences cannot be ignored.

There were two items in the Political factor ranked at the extreme. Item 17, ideas of the political Party in power, was rated as very important. Respectively, item 18, ideas of opposition Parties, was ranked as not very important. As mentioned in chapter 5, the UK is a country which adopts the party political system. The political Party in power is the centre of administration. It is the majority Party which organises the government and leads this nation. In policy-making, the Cabinet, or in a broader term, the Government, is the prime policy-maker. The ideologies of the Party in power are reflected in policies. Thatcherism is an obvious example. Regarding ACE, the Thatcher Government's policies on cutting public expenditure and on market competition both resulted in some negative effects. After the 1970s, the domination of vocationalism, economism, and market orientation in the courses had some relationships with these ideas. Interviewees at stage 2, Mr Tuckett, Mr Wells, Ms Melville, Ms Reisenberger, Professor Ball and Duke also emphasised the significance of ideologies of the political party in power. As for the opposition Parties, although they have opportunities to express their opinions in the House or committees through debates and questioning, their influence, compared with the leading party, is limited. Especially, when the British competitiveness has stably become the guideline of government, even the Labour Party has no choice to change the route (Professor Ball and Jarvis), although that is likely a speculation(Professor Duke).

***Social factor***

The Social factor was ranked as the fourth. Among four items, three were rated as quite important: the development of information technology used for ACE, demographic trends of society eg the increase of aged people, and the change of lifestyle of the public. These three items could be gathered as one broad factor called social change and development. Information technology is the product of scientific invention and development. For example, distance learning institutions such as the Open University has played a significant role in ACE. Demographic trends and the change of lifestyle both are parts of social change. The development of medical science and the rise of living standards have extended people's life expectancy. An older population has grown and people can have more opportunities to continue their learning. Education for old people therefore has been a vital topic on the DFE's policy agenda. The change of lifestyle results from people's arrangement of their leisure activities. Continuing learning may become an after work activity for most people. It is one of the reasons why liberal adult education has been demanded. This was Sargant's finding (Sargant, 1991, p. 16) that the time commitment to study and learning was significant and for people was a commitment made at the cost of their leisure. Average time spent per week was 9.3 hours, with men spending 10.1 hours and women spending 8.4 hours. Owing to the importance of social change, the Alexander Report stressed that it was the main facilitator stimulating the development of adult education (Scottish Education Department, 1975).

Item 11, the reorganisation of the social class structure was ranked as not very important. This rating is interesting. Sargant (1991, p. 12) found out that the major factor affecting participation continued to be social class. The upper and middle classes stayed at school longer, went on to post-school education at a higher rate, and were then much more likely to return to continue their education as adults than the working class. In a survey, the finding showed that almost twice as many white collar workers as skilled manual workers were currently studying (32% compared with 17%), and the trend suggests the gap was widening (Tuckett and Sargant, 1996). In terms of the development of British adult education, as Fletcher (1993) indicated, English adult education has its origins in workers' struggle, in their

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determination to learn to read and write. Simon (1990) also stressed that the working class involvement in adult education had a history as long as that of the working class itself. Traditionally, adult education played a major role in providing remedial education, especially for the working class. According to the above empirical findings and relevant arguments, social class seems to be a vital factor related to adult education. However, in this research, reorganisation of the social class structure was ranked as not very importantly affecting national ACE policy-making. There may be two reasons here. First, the finding suggests that the DFE did not pay much attention to the influence of reorganisation of social class. Second, this factor is seen by the sample as a result of adults' learning. Reorganisation of the social class structure may be the '*result*' that adults in lower social classes may upgrade to a higher class after their learning instead of the '*reason*' affecting national ACE policy-making. Additionally, in the light of learning participation, the influence of social class would be more obvious, as Sargant (1990) and Tuckett and Sargant (1996) found. But on policy-making, its influence could decline. For these possible reasons, item 11 was rated as not very important.

### *Educational factor*

Educational factor was ranked as the least significant one affecting national ACE policy-making. Two items were rated as quite important: the desire for cooperation between statutory and voluntary sectors (49.20%, N=60) and influences of updated educational theories (37.70%, N=46). The other two items were evaluated as not very important: the demand for increasing traditional liberal ACE (32.50%, N=39) and ACE trends in the world (45.50%, N=56).

Voluntary sectors have played a key role in British ACE. In terms of the development, we could say that in this country, ACE was firstly provided by voluntary sectors followed by statutory ones. As Kelly (1992) showed, the earliest adult education service was religious, offered by some Puritan ministers in the 16th century. Jennings (1985) also indicated, among the churches that provided adult education at the beginning in the 19th century, the Methodists had made the most distinctive contributions. These providers were all voluntary

sector. Up to now, in addition to religious institutions, The WEA is the largest voluntary adult education organisation in the UK. It has about 800 local branches and about 170,000 students enrol in courses each year. It serves adults with plentiful opportunities and its contributions cannot be overlooked. The then Minister, Mr Boswell (1993) stressed that 'I believe voluntary bodies have a significant contribution to make to the further education of adults. The Department for Education has acknowledged that role formally over the years by paying grants to a number of national voluntary bodies, in recognition of their role in promoting education for active citizenship and progression through further education.' In the recent policy discussion paper, 'The Will to Learn: Individual Commitment and Adult Learning', NIACE (1994a) also highlighted that 'there are, essentially, four sources from which the money, energy and thinking needed to create and sustain a learning society can be drawn - Government, Employers, Provider (public, private, and *voluntary*) (the researcher's highlight) and individuals themselves'.

Many LEAs have already provided support to voluntary sectors, for instance, to the local branches of national bodies such as the Women's Institute; or through community-based projects in the inner cities and elsewhere. As the Minister pointed out, voluntary bodies have particular strengths: they are often closely involved with local communities and have the capacity to respond quickly and flexibly to local needs. 'It is crucial that the further education, LEA and voluntary sectors all work together to increase the participation of adults in education and training' (Boswell, 1993, p. 267). In the function of meeting grassroots needs, voluntary sectors could have the flexibility which statutory bodies lack. So, the cooperation between voluntary and statutory bodies has been emphasised by the DFE and it was ranked as a quite important factor affecting national ACE policy-making.

Influences of updated educational theories were rated as quite important as well. Updated educational theories have vital influences on the practices of ACE. The development of ideas of 'Distance Education' and 'Open Learning' fostered the establishment of the Open University in 1969. These ideas and institution had extended a host of learning opportunities by getting rid of the restriction of distance and space. This successful British experience in



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the Open University was taken as a model by many countries such as Israel, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan. The concept of 'Experiential Learning' originating in John Dewey's Experience Theory, has been developed and applied as a significant teaching method, especially in the workplace. As Thorpe (1993, p. 12) indicated, the supporters of accrediting experiential learning, often called Accrediting Prior Experiential Learning, have been so successful that it is now a recognised component in the qualifications developed through the work of the NCVQs, the Central Council for the Education and Training of Social Workers, the Training and Enterprise Councils, the Management Charter Initiative, and so on. About the workforce training, private companies such as Ford, Rover, and IBM all have utilised experiential learning in designing their programmes successfully for a long time. From these two cases of updated educational ideas, it seems that the DFE is able to refer to critical educational theories in ACE. However, as Professor Jarvis commented, the British government is not very oriented to academic research. Mr Kershaw, Professor Ball and Jarvis all indicated that comparatively, academics had less influences in the DFE's policy-making. It shows that the DFE needed further to listen to opinions of academics and made policy more academic or based it on relevant theories.

As to the demand for increasing traditional liberal ACE, it was rated as not very important. The researcher has shown the decline of traditional liberal adult education, particularly after the 1970s. Although the 1973 Russell Report focused on this field, the changing environmental factor such as economic recession resulted in most of the Report's recommendations not being carried out. So far, vocational ACE has been the mainstream of the DFE's provision; respectively, liberal ACE has been more marginalised. Interviewees at stage 2, except Professor Jarvis who showed that there is a growing market of liberal ACE, Mr Croome, Ms Melville, Ms Nickoles, Ms Reinsenberger, Mr Tuckett, and Mr Wells, all made this common point that liberal ACE has declined. Both Mr Kershaw and Mr Kirwan thought that liberal ACE is pessimistic in its future. The 1992 FHEA has left LEAs mainly in charge of liberal adult education; however, the DFE did not give them much funding. Due to the limited resources, the future of traditional liberal ACE is much more pessimistic and

uncertain. After the learning right for all has been stressed in the Green Paper, it would be helpful for adults to attain liberal provision.

ACE trends in the world were ranked as not very important. This research has mentioned that family literacy developed in the USA was late to be referred to by the DFE and we have not found any project in Britain which is similar to the model of the cooperation between private and public bodies employed in Japan. In order to advance the quality of the workforce to promote British competitiveness in the economy, workplace training has been a main topic on the government's policy agenda. This trend also happened in the USA. How to meet and win the global challenge and competition through ACE are hot topics in the USA. For these targets, a method called 'Functional Context Approach' has been widely applied in American workforce training. The chief concept of this approach is that the basic skills training workers received should be conducted using the vehicle of actual job scenarios and materials (Philippi, 1994). It highlights the fact that workplace training should be conducted in the working context closely related to the workers' practical jobs and skills. This idea is quite similar to experiential learning, which has been popularly utilised in the British workplace training. The programmes provided in experiential learning are based on and connect with workers' experiences. The Functional Context Approach not only builds on worker's experiences but stresses the concept of context. If the programmes are only based on workers' experiences, they likely become fragmented and incomplete, and then lead to less success because workers' experiences are very diverse. The idea of 'Context' could avoid the possible limitation of experiential learning in the workplace. But, we have not heard from the DFE's positive mention of Function Context Approach so far. OECD (1975) also commented that one of the shortcomings of policy-making in the previous DFE was that it saw its planning function as 'identifying the existing trend' and then seeking to cater for it as best it could in the future. This idea of sticking to the existing trend and the DFE's hesitation to look forward towards the future could make the DFE ignore the up-to-date trends in the world. Although, as Sir Ron Dearing's experience showed, the DFE did have some international comparisons in making educational policy (Morgan, 1996), its efforts are still insufficient to meet the strong demands of principal stakeholders. Partly because of the

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diffusion of educational responsibilities across numerous government departments (Fletcher, 1995) and the need of a longer consultancy, the DFE might have its difficulty in responding to the international trends of ACE quickly, except the European Union.

As discussed above, in terms of the whole group of factors, Learner factor was the most important one rated by the majority sample of the postal questionnaire survey, followed by the Economic, Political, Social, and Educational factors. It is significant to point out that although the Learner factor was ahead of the Economic one, the difference of means was small ( $14.285 - 13.073 = 1.212$ ). Additionally, the difference of means between Economic and Political factors was very small ( $13.073 - 12.532 = .541$ ). But Social and Educational factors were obviously behind them. This suggests that in spite of the Learner factor standing in first place, the significance of the Economic and Political factors are also distinctive, above all the Economic factor. Learner, Economic, and Political factors can be seen as the three major influential factors, especially, the former two. The researcher has indicated many times through the literature review and findings of interviews that from the 1970s to the 1992 FHEA, the 1994 White Paper, 'Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win', and the Green Paper: the Learning Age, economism has affected the DFE's ACE policy agenda. At the same time, Learner factor has also been increasing its potential influence.

The interaction between the Learner and Economic factors implies that there is a close link between them in influence and there is a debate on education for the being or for the market. The Economic factor's influence is easily reinforced because individual adult learner can continue their learning for economic targets. For instance, during economic recession, how to enrich vocational skills to survive in the labour market could become a major motive of adult learners. This economic target will lead to adults' increasing demands on vocational courses. Partly for meeting adults' demands, partly for the whole country's requirements, then the DFE's policy-making could show an obviously economic orientation. Mr Croome at the FEFC also emphasised this interactive influences between adult learners, employers, and the government. They could become a cycle. The influences of the Learner and Economic factors therefore could possibly be perceived together. In another respect, the 'competition'

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in influence between the Learner and Economic factors shows that there is a debate between education for adult learners and education for the market (Jarvis, 1993). In terms of the social welfare model, ACE is the right of adults. Their learning right should be protected no matter whether they are learning for practical targets or learning for its own sake. In contrast, the market model refers to economic functions. Only ACE which could contribute to economic goals would be funded. If adults' targets are for economic reasons, they could enjoy the mainstream of ACE. If adults' targets have no economic functions, for individual or the whole country, their learning right could be marginalised. Actually, when the economic functions of ACE have been focused on, the White Paper of the 1996 European Lifelong Learning Year (Cresson, 1996) and the recent Green Paper, the Learning Age (Fryer, 1998) all emphasise that learning is for everyone with no exclusion. Though the debate is still there, an acceptable balance between learning for economic purposes and learning for individual purposes is not impossible. The author will discuss that further in the following chapter.

### *Supplementary influential factors*

As analysed in chapter 7, there were supplemented influential factors listed by the sample. These factors supplemented the factors collected by the researcher and directly reflected the sample's personal viewpoints.

Those supplementary influential factors reveal the significance of the Economic factor. Four factors included in the Educational factor all show an economic orientation in national ACE policy-making. These factors were NVQs, NETTs, the difficulty in making government understand the importance of a liberal adult education network, and the idea which values vocational education and devalues nonvocational one. They are the factors reflected in educational ideas and system when the government has aimed at economic targets. The shortage of funding was also raised. Nearly all the interviewees at stage 1 who served in traditional adult education colleges and centres mentioned their shortage of funding. They were striving to get funds to survive. Another factor is formed by attitudes of employers and their partnership pattern. The increasing influence of employers in business and industry is

mainly facilitated by economic power such as the government's requirement on employers' investments in the workforce training and involvement in the partnership. In this context, the influence of the ignorance of local needs has been shown. Quangos like FEFCs and TECs were criticised as not understanding local needs. Although these quangos are composed of diverse members, employers have been the majority and key persons. Therefore it is the market need rather than the local need that can be reflected in the Councils. This majority opinions in the quangos then form an interactive influence with the DFE in national ACE policy-making. As a consequence, local needs would be much more far away the DFE's ACE policy agenda.

**Hypothesis 2. National ACE policies can be grouped.**

This hypothesis is *untested*. National ACE policies were collected from the government's policy documents, published research papers, and the sample's opinions at stage 1. Those items were ranked via the sample's demands with the evidence of closed, open and interview questions. Although these ACE policies cannot be grouped into different patterns, they have a clear characteristic of learner-orientedness.

ACE policies demanded by the sample were mostly relating to supporting adult learning and recognising the learning achievement. Learning supports such as advice and guidance service, childcare, mandatory grants and loans, concessionary fees, widening access, and pathways and progression routes were all significant topics of concern to the public and DFE. For instance, in the 1994 White Paper, 'Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win', the Conservative Government planed to expand the out of hours school childcare initiative to over 20,000 places in 1994/95. Particularly when adults suffered the effects of economic recession, providing plentiful resources and services has become significant.

Sufficient funding for adults was highly demanded to support adults' participation. Because of the shortage of funding, above all in liberal education, adult learners have had to pay their own tuition fees. For example, as Powell (1993) found out, most institutions cut budgets and had to raise the fee levels to above the rate of inflation. For instance, the largest-scale fee set

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by Tameside College was 120 per cent. During the economic recession, the situation got worse. Enrolment has decreased. A NIACE's survey found that individuals had to bear a higher proportion of the cost of courses, and at the same time that cost was a major reason for participation (NIACE, 1994b). The situation was more obvious for adults studying liberal courses because most funding had gone to qualifying and vocational courses.

ACE policies were demanded to protect adult learning right, especially for the disadvantaged. Though the Government has paid attention to that, ACE policies seemed still insufficient. For instance, in the NIACE's publication, 'Quality Education and Training for the Adult Unemployed', the quality of education and training for unemployed adults was emphasised. As NIACE showed, two of the Conservative Government's priorities for the 1990s at the centre of the national strategy were: People who are unemployed and those at a disadvantage in the jobs market must be helped to get back to work and to develop their abilities to the full, and the providers of education and training must offer high quality and flexible provision which meets the needs of individuals and employers (NIACE, 1992b, p. 81). As the 1994 White Paper, 'Competitiveness' noted, the Conservative Government tried to strengthen help for unemployed people to get back to work whilst emphasising their responsibility to seek work. Both education and training were the government's supporting services. The priorities stressed education and training for unemployed adults and those at a disadvantage in the jobs market on the one hand. On the other hand, they highlighted the quality and flexibility of provision.

A free-of-charge entitlement was strongly demanded. Mr Tuckett at the NIACE also stressed that an entitlement for adults was one of his personal policy priorities. NVQs have become the official and the most significant entitlements in post 16 education and training. As the 1994 White Paper, 'Competitiveness' showed, the first task for the Government was to raise standards further. The Government would ensure that NVQs and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) remained up to date and continuing to observe strict standards. All existing NCQs/SVQs were to be reviewed by April 1996 (Department of Trade and Industry, 1994, p. 4). Both NVQs and SVQs were the objectives and criteria in NETTs. In England

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and Wales, NVQs have become the highest guidelines of qualifying and vocational continuing education. A 'free-of-charge' entitlement seemed to be ideal then.

Credit scheme, resource formula, and credit accumulation and transfer framework were all in relation to the educational system. One inventive plan in the 1994 White Paper was that the Conservative Government established 'learning credits' for all 16-19 year old whether in full-time education or work to give young people the power to buy their own education and training. If the 'learning credits' for young people were effective and welcome, maybe they could be applied to adults over 19 to develop a credit system linking adult's previous learning and training. In the Green Paper, the Labour Government will set up individual learning accounts to encourage people to save to learn (DfEE, 1998). The new policy could be further linked to develop a system of credit accumulation, as Stott suggested (1998).

ACE policies directly relating to adults' participation were highly ranked. Since they were ranked through the sample's priority, the tendency of high ranking was obvious. It means that the sample think most of them are significant, particularly policies helpful for adult continuing learning. We can see some of the sample's priorities were also on the DFE's policy agenda. But, as interviewees at stage 2 have indicated, the DFE's ACE policy priorities were led mainly by the economic targets. ACE policies which could have contribution to the British economic competitiveness had occupied the DFE's ACE policy agenda. The evidence can be found in the Schedule 2 and the following White Paper, although adult basic education and ACE for adults with learning difficulties were also emphasised. The sample's ACE priorities were not so market-oriented but learner-oriented. ACE policies which can support adults' continuing learning have been highlighted. The tendency of high ranking on current ACE policies and the following demanded ACE policies directly listed are all evidence.

As to the open question, the sample listed their preferred national ACE policies and these tended to be learner-oriented. The sample of the postal questionnaire survey and interviews stressed the national ACE policies which were directly helpful for adults' continuing

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learning. Those demanded ACE policies can be summarised into the following classifications:

- 1 Protecting learning right for ACE;
- 2 Meeting local needs of ACE;
- 3 Developing an entitlement for adults' learning;
- 4 Providing sufficient funding in research and service;
- 5 Establishing national initiatives and national targets for adults;
- 6 Clarifying the concept of adult education;
- 7 Improving continuing education for the disadvantaged.

Above demanded ACE policies show a clear tendency of learners-orientedness. ACE policies regarding adult learning right, needs, and entitlement are mostly stressed. In order to support adults' continuing learning, sufficient funding, national initiatives and targets are demanded. To clarify the concept of adult education to widen its functions in a multiple dimension perspective instead of only in economic targets is also raised. Those demanded national ACE policies have an obvious spirit in reflection the idea of social welfare model in adult education. ACE is seen as the right for every adult to achieve different kinds of targets. ACE for the disadvantaged has to be protected and improved. The DFE's ACE policies also highlighted the increase of adults participation in lifetime learning, continuing education for adults with learning difficulties and adult basic education. It shows that there was a common concern between the DFE and the majority people in adults' lifetime learning. The principal difference is that the DFE put more emphases on the economic targets and gave its provision in a practical orientation to meet the needs of the market. The DFE's ACE policies comparatively revealed a clear spirit of the market model. As discussed before, people's demands of ACE policies might be passed to the DFE via different paths such as pressure groups, advisory sectors, MPs, academics and so forth. Although it is not necessary for the DFE to take on all of the demands, in terms of ACE policy-making, the DFE had to learn the real needs of the majority. When the DFE and the majority people relating to ACE had a consensus in improving adults' lifetime learning, it is time for the central government to consider how to make acceptable national ACE policies reflecting the real demands and not



merely for achieving economic targets. Especially, when there has been more less general adult education (Tuckett and Sargant, 1996), adults who learn for nonvocational courses need more supports. Therefore, the gap between the DFE's and the majority people's national ACE policy agendas was waiting to be bridged.

**Hypothesis 3. Different factors have different interpretations of national ACE policies.**

This hypothesis is *accepted*. According to the comparison of five factors' interpretation on the demanded national ACE policies, we found that the Learner factor was the most powerful variable, followed by the Educational factor. Economic, Social, and Political factors were unable to enter the regression model. These three factors' ability in explaining the national policies is too small to be qualified in the model. Although the Educational factor was qualified, it only had 2.70% explanation of variance. Instead, the Learner factor alone could explain the variance of national ACE policies up to 36.10%. As data analysis has shown, the reason is that the sample ranked those ACE policies according to their own priority. Therefore, the finding suggests that the Learner factor is more important than other four factors, in terms of the interpretation of demanded national ACE policies. It implies the trait of learner-orientedness of the preferred ACE policies that results in this finding.

**Hypothesis 4. Different people rank national ACE policies differently.**

This hypothesis is *untested*. According to the analytical framework in Figure 6.2, people's demographic backgrounds were the independent variable and national ACE policies were the dependent variable. People's demographic variables included gender, age, occupation, and place of residence. The purpose of this analysis was to find out if there is any significant correlation between the demographic characteristics of the sample and the sample's responses to the questions on current national ACE policies. However, as chapter 7 has discussed, the result of ranking on the questionnaire for the DFE's ACE policy priorities was the sample's priorities. The sample's policy priorities reflect their demands of national ACE policies but these data cannot be compared in terms of their judgement on the DFE's ACE policy priorities. Therefore, this hypothesis cannot be examined according to the collected data.

**Hypothesis 5. Different people rank factors affecting national ACE policy-making differently.**

This hypothesis is *partly accepted*. In accordance with the analytical framework in Figure 6.2, people's demographic variables were the independent variable and factors affecting national ACE policy-making were the outer variable representing the environmental impact. The purpose was to seek whether there is any difference in ranking these factors due to people's varied background. The sample's rating on the importance of various factors can reveal their opinions in factors' practical influences on national ACE policy-making, and reflect their individual experiences and problems.

***Males and females do not have significantly different ranking on factors affecting national ACE policy-making.***

The test of MANOVA found  $F(5, 116) = .722, P > .05$ . There was no significant difference between males and females in ranking influential factors. They expressed a similar opinion in rating the importance of different factors.

The result implies that gender is not an important variable causing the different evaluation on factors affecting national ACE policy-making. In the light of Educational, Economic, Social, Learner, and Political factors, both males and females have a similar opinion on each factor's influence. Those five factors are assumed as the environmental variable affecting national ACE policy-making. Their influences could scatter widely, covering various organisations, and people. When measuring the influence of these factors, since people may perceive the same sources of influence in the environment, they are likely to present a similar opinion no matter the difference of gender. This may be the reason why there is no significant difference in ranking factors between males and females.

***Different people of different ages do not have significantly different ranking on factors affecting national ACE policy-making.***

MANOVA test had no statistical significance,  $F(15, 306) = .439, p > .05$ . The difference of the sample's ages did not lead to the different ranking on influential factors.

### ***Chapter 8 Discussion of the findings***

Like the variable, gender, age is not an important variable resulting in the distinct evaluation on influential factors. Different age groups from 18 to 65 have a similar opinion on five factors' influences on national ACE policy-making. The finding implies that since the influence of the five factors are widely spread, people likely perceive a similar impact no matter the difference of age.

#### ***People with different occupations do not have significantly different ranking on factors affecting national ACE policy-making.***

F (15, 318) of MANOVA test was .859,  $p > .05$ . No statistical significance was found. The difference of the sample's occupations did not lead to the different ranking on five factors' influences.

Whoever they are, administrators in LEAs, lecturers in higher education institutions, leaders of professional organisations or adult educators in a variety of institutions, people have no significantly different opinions on influential factors. This finding provides us with evidence that in various sectors, people perceive similar influences of the five factors. The importance of factors is not rated differently in diverse organisations. In terms of ACE, people in these relevant organisations ie LEAs, higher education institutions, professional organisations, and different colleges and centres, show a similar picture of factors' influences in the environment. It suggests that although people play different roles in different sectors, they are in agreement to the impact of the five factors.

#### ***People in different places of residence have significantly different ranking on factors affecting national ACE policy-making.***

In ANOVA, we found  $F(3, 117) = 4.994$ ,  $p < .05$ . The significant difference was in the Learner factor. *Post hoc* comparison showed that the subsamples living in London valued the importance of the Learner factor more than those in English counties ( $16.040 > 13.882$ ) and in Wales ( $16.040 > 10.800$ ). Both differences were at .05 levels. In other words, people in London put more emphases on the Learner factor than those in English counties and in Wales.

### *Chapter 8 Discussion of the findings*

The result that people living in London mostly point out that the Learner factor is an important factor affecting national ACE policy-making suggests that they may perceive more influences from this factor. In other words, according to people living in London, national ACE policy-making could be mainly affected by the Learner factor. Adults' participation motivation, adults' basic education, adults' diverse needs, and adults' economic ability to pay the fees are highly ranked by Londoners. As mentioned earlier, traditionally, adult's participation rate was higher in Inner London than the country as a whole (Sargant, 1991). A survey also supports this trend. Recent participation rate in London is higher than in the UK (44% to 40%). In ten regions in England and Wales, current and recent participation rate in London occupies the 4th place (44%); in future intentions of participation, samples in London are in the second place in very and fairly likely participation (44%); have the lowest ratio of very and fairly unlikely participation (50%) (Tuckett and Sargant, 1996). The comparatively higher participation rates in ACE make Londoners have a tendency to perceive the Learner factor's higher influence. As the interviewees, Ms Melville and Mr Croome pointed out that traditionally, ACE sectors in London provide more opportunities for continuing learning. They may tend to perceive the importance of the Learner's factor. Besides, because London is the capital city where the DFE makes its ACE policy, it is the popular place for different people and groups to express their demands and recommendations to the central government. It is the shortest route for presenting voices from London to the DFE. This is one of the reasons why London is the popular place for national ACE conferences and seminars. For example, NIACE has a branch in central London and usually organises diverse meetings in London. It seems that the influence of the Learner factor in the DFE's ACE policy-making that is passed by different people and groups is comparatively easily perceived by Londoners. In addition, national institution such as the ALBSU is located in the central London and ALBSU set up a resource centre in the library of Institute of Education which is open to the public. Due to the above possible reasons, people in London would express that national ACE policy-making could be mainly affected by the Learner factor.

Only one dimension regarding the relationship between people's demographic variables and

### *Chapter 8 Discussion of the findings*

factors affecting national ACE policy-making is accepted. People living in London stress the influence of the Learner factor on national ACE policy-making highly than those in English counties and Wales. As for gender, age, and occupation of people, they do not result in any significant difference in the ranking on influential factors. It means that the perception of the five factors' influences could be seen as no difference in terms of people's gender, age, and occupation. Additionally, the less significant difference in ranking influential factors also suggests that the perception of influential factors is consistent. Those factors can be seen as the stable environmental influential resources on the DFE's ACE policy-making.

### **Summary**

Discussion in this chapter is developed from the literature review and empirical data of postal questionnaire survey and interviews at stage 2. Five hypotheses have been tested, based on the findings of the empirical data analysis and interviews. Three hypotheses were accepted and two were untested. The possible reasons explaining those tests also have been drawn and discussed. Most reasons were explored in two aspects: the practice of national ACE policy-making and policies, and the demands of a variety of people according to the literature review and empirical data. A comprehensive discussion concerning the research questions, purposes, and findings was conducted. Complicated problems such as policy-making in the DFE, the simplification of influential determinants and the DFE's ACE policies were analysed. Some difficulties and valuable findings have been discussed to be the basis of the following conclusion.

## **Chapter 9**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

After the discussion through the link between the literature review and empirical data and making feedback to the previous stages of this research, we have been able to describe the profile of changing ACE in England and Wales. Learner and Economic factors have been ranked as the major influential factors affecting national ACE policy-making; national ACE policies achieving the economic targets were emphasised on the DFE's policy agenda and policies directly contributing to adults' learning were mostly strong demands. It has also become more simple to reveal the process of the DFE's policy-making and make evaluation of it. Those findings could be referred to improving the practices and studies of ACE policy-making in the DFE/DfEE.

This chapter is intended to make conclusions and suggestions, based on the findings of this research. It shows a whole picture of this research through tracing back to its starting point and listing its findings. The researcher links the literature review to the empirical findings; then raises suggestions to the DfEE, professional organisations and following researchers who may study similar topics.

The chapter includes five sections:

- 9.1 ACE in change;
- 9.2 Systems analysis of national ACE policy-making;
- 9.3 Findings related to the changing ACE;
- 9.4 A feature and a future;
- 9.5 From ACE to lifelong learning.
- 9.6 Suggestions.

## **9.1 ACE in change**

Britain is one of the pioneer countries developing ACE. Since the 16th century, ACE has gradually become a stream of educational services. After nearly 500 years, ACE in England and Wales has undergone a great obvious change. In terms of clients, from the education for people in the context of religion to the education for people in competition, the client type has clearly shifted. In function, from the provision for remedial purposes to the provision for practical purposes, the focused courses have mostly been revised. This research has discussed these changes via reviewing the main Reports, Acts, research and the significant practices.

### **The changes sought via documents and legislation**

From the 1919 Report to 1973 Russell Report, the important documents have shown the changes of ACE in England and Wales. The 1919 Report and 1973 Russell Report, which were specially produced for ACE, presented a high degree of concern about traditional nonvocational provision. However, due to the influences of various factors, their recommendations became far from practice, above all those of the Russell Report. The 1970s was a turning point affecting the fate of ACE. The economic condition was a distinctive factor illustrating this critical change. The 1954 Ashby Report, which focused on the financial problems of ACE, could be a prior indicator of this situation.

From the 1944 Act to 1992 FHEA, legislations has indicated the shifts of ACE. Since legislation have legal regulations on administration and they are the criteria for government's evaluation, their revisions of regulations associated with ACE have suggested something significant. In these legislations, ACE was subsumed under the umbrella, 'Further Education'. Unlike other countries such as Japan's 'Social Education Law'; Taiwan, and the USA, which both have a special 'Adult Education Act', Britain does not give ACE an independent legislative status out of further education. An encouraging change is that the 1992 FHEA was the first Act which specially included ACE as a larger part. This trend differs from the 1944 Act and the 1988 ERA, which both merely afforded ACE a small section in their whole

## *Chapter 9 Conclusions and Suggestions*

regulations. In addition to the shift of legislative status, Schedule 2 of the 1992 FHEA has clearly listed funded courses of ACE in England and Wales.

### **The changes sought via the practices**

The practices of ACE have also changed. As discussed in the literature review, educational statistics increases from the 1920s to 1996 showed that qualifying and vocational courses have had higher enrolments than traditional nonvocational courses. Practical courses have dominated the list of provision. More young people have been studying in traditional sectors serving adults and more adults have been studying in further education colleges which mainly served young people aged 16-19 in the past ( eg 30% 16-18 young adults and 69% adults in Council-funded provision at colleges in 1995). Most of them are aiming at practical targets such as for competition in the labour market. Owing to the closer relationship between ACE and the labour market, employers' influences in this field have increased.

Recent empirical surveys also revealed that because of the shifts of focus, adults who aim for liberal courses have had less access, compared with their counterparts studying vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education. They have to pay higher fees for learning by themselves. The rising cost of self-financing has affected adults' motivation to participate, specially those who have difficulties in economy.

### **The main changes of ACE**

In brief, those changes of ACE sought in England and Wales could be classified into the following five points:

#### *Change of the legislative position*

Traditionally, ACE was comprised in further education and regulated with general education by legislation. The lack of an independent legislative position might be one of the reasons why ACE used to be described as the 'Cinderella' looking for resources. The 1992 FHEA was the first Act enacted particularly for further and higher education. Though ACE was still contained in further education, the independence of further education from general education



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in the legislation is an encouraging change. The independence of enactment may provide ACE with a legislative protection and improve its traditionally poor position in the whole educational system.

### *Change of the providers*

Providers of ACE have had a great change. In terms of statutory provision, LEAs were in charge of most services for adult learners before the 1992 FHEA took effect. In the past, LEAs provided ACE through their major sectors such as adult education centres, community colleges and community schools. They served adult learners by offering mostly liberal courses in each community as a unit. With the transfer of power from the local government to the central government after the 1980s, LEAs have been gradually deprived of their traditional powers and responsibilities. The change has clearly shown in the legislation since the 1988 ERA. The 1992 FHEA has given the two new institutions, FEFCs and HEFCs, the major powers and responsibilities transferred from LEAs. Above all, the FEFCs have been empowered to fund the mainstream of provision ie vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education. Facilitated by the focus, the FEFCs have become the prime provider of ACE. LEAs were left the power mainly to provide the declining provision except for the above three funded courses. LEAs' role in serving ACE has been mostly substituted by the FEFCs and HEFCs.

### *Change of the provision*

Vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education have become the mainstream of ACE provision. In terms of the development, since ACE was usually served in informal and nonformal styles, most adults have seen it as a learning activity outside the formal educational system. In the past, for most people, learning might be a leisure or, say, a recreational activity. Most adults continued their learning for its own sake rather than for practical reasons. Therefore, those nonpractical and nonvocational liberal courses such as literature, history, art etc. were the previous mainstream of provision. Both the 1919 Report and 1973 Russell Report focused on merely drawing their concerns on nonvocational provision. However, under the influences of economic factors and others, ACE provision has

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changed to a more practical orientation. Not only was the shift fostered by the DFE but also more adults continued their learning for practical purposes. Respectively, traditional liberal provision has gradually declined. The 1992 FHEA further listed vocational and qualifying courses, and adult basic education as three main funded provision. The facilitation of legislation and of other relevant factors has resulted in the funded courses enjoying more resources. Liberal ACE provision hence has been more marginalised and become uncertain.

### *Change of the partnership*

A closer relationship between the DFE and employers has been established. In the past, the major partnership for providing ACE was between the government (statutory sectors) and voluntary sectors such as religious charities, the WEA, and Women's Institutes. Comparatively, industry and business had less involvement in this field. With the emphasis on workforce training, mainly due to the influence of economic factors, employers have had more participation in ACE. Their demands are also reflected on the provision and official certifications such as the NETTs and NVQs. Employers have more opportunities to be involved in making policies via advocacy bodies or committees. The DFE encouraged employers to invest more resources in continuing learning such as workplace training through the tax relief. The DFE also stressed cooperation with employers for providing continuing learning and training. A more obvious partnership between the DFE and employers had grown steadily.

### *Change of the policy-makers*

The DFE had become a chief policy-maker in ACE. LEAs had more powers and responsibilities for serving ACE before the 1988 ERA. They were the principal provider and played a significant role in policy-making. During this time, ACE provision was mostly localised in the community. Diversity was its main character. '**National**' policy was less important and not distinctive. But, LEAs' influence on ACE has gradually reduced due to the centralisation of educational administration after the 1970s. The 1988 ERA was a signal and the 1992 FHEA directly transferred LEAs' powers and responsibilities to the new institutions, FEFCs and HEFCs. LEAs' role in ACE policy-making therefore was devalued. In contrast,

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the DFE had become the prime policy-maker in ACE mostly through its leadership on the FEFCs and HEFCs. Though relevant organisations and people had opportunities to participate in the policy process, the DFE had consequently dominated the whole procedure, above all national ACE policies. The previous character of ACE ie diversity has been fading. More similarities have appeared as a new character of ACE provision, for example, vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education.

The above changes in five 'Ps' ie position, provider, provision, partnership, and policy-maker, show a picture of shifting ACE in England and Wales. As a Chinese proverb says, these changes do not happen 'in one day and one night', say, in a short time. These changes have continued over nearly a century, from the 1900s to the early years of the 1990s. They have been influenced by varied factors in different dimensions.

### **Factors affecting the changes of ACE**

The changes of ACE in England and Wales have been affected by various factors. Factors that influence ACE in England and Wales are complex. As mentioned earlier, the economic condition of this country is an obvious one. Others are economic development and its relevant factors such as employers' demands on workforce training. Adults' diverse needs are also impacted by the economic factors. The demand of the labour market could influence their motives for learning. Adults' participation motivation and diverse needs also likely affect the provision. Demographic changes such as the growth in the number of old people is a social factor affecting ACE. The idea of equal educational opportunity for the disadvantaged is another social factor facilitating this field. The development of educational ideas such as lifelong learning and distance learning, is an educational factor affecting ACE. The organisation of educational institutions and educational trends in the world are other educational factors. In national ACE policy, the ideologies of the political party in power are distinctive influential sources. The Thatcherism of the Conservative Party is an example. Since policy-making is a political process, the influence of the opposition parties, civil servants, and professional organisations are other political factors.

The researcher therefore listed Political, Economic, Social, Educational, and Learner factors as five groups of factors affecting the DFE's ACE policy-making and after the examination, Economic and Learner factors were ranked as the major factors. Although above supposed factor groups were confirmed, it is difficult to simplify the influential resources on ACE policy-making and have a classification due to the interaction between factors.

Since policy-making is the centre of administration, it is more direct and effective to discuss these changes of ACE via policy-making, especially at national level. From above five dimensions of factors, the researcher scanned their influences on national ACE policy-making in England and Wales and compared the difference in their impact. The main purpose was to build a whole picture of this changing system through the exploration of influential factors and then to show a clear trend involving various dimensions in this complicated context.

## **9.2 System analysis of national ACE policy-making**

In order to analyse national ACE policy-making in England and Wales, the researcher applied systems theory as the theoretical framework and linked to various influential factors. The process of policy-making in the DFE was also discussed through the systems analysis.

### **Systems theory provides a comparatively complete analysis framework.**

Compared with other theories applied in studying policy-making, systems theory was more suitable for this research. As discussed in chapter 4, system theory includes a broader scope than approaches which analyse politics, state, and pressure groups. Though systems theory has its limitations, for the purposes of this research, it is more suitable than other approaches. In terms of scope, systems theory could comprise the other three main approaches. Through systems theory, the researcher was able to discuss ideologies of political parties, the government's influences, and the role of pressure groups in policy-making. It would be difficult to achieve this by any one of the other three approaches which may only focus on one dimension.

The three stages of systems theory are able to meet the need for discussing policy-making in different respects. Systems theory utilises input, throughput, and output as a series of analyses in a whole context. Despite the fact that the three stage process seems simplified, it provides an opportunity for deep discussion on each stage and for linking three stages as a cycle. Above all, systems theory hypothesises the context as an open system and highlights the influence from the outer environment. In an interactive process of administration, systems theory gives more space for analysing dynamic policy-making. Policies are usually formulated via different stages and in distinct respects of consideration. They are not formed in a single stage. In terms of a national ACE policy, as it is a public policy which has a close relationship with the public, it usually becomes the focus of the public's attention. Policy-makers are required to take the public's demands outside their context into account when making decisions. Because of this character of ACE policy, systems theory is more useful for analysing policy-making through exploring the influence of the public and environment.

**Systems theory is not sufficient for analysing the process of the DFE's policy-making.**

In general, the DFE had a pluralist process of policy-making but the degree depended on the definition of pluralism. In the DFE, policy-makers like ministers might consult with advisory bodies and discuss with their colleagues in their department or other government's departments through inner and inter departmental interaction. Outside the DFE, relevant professional organisations and others had opportunities to participate in policy-making. The public also had opportunities to discuss the government's policies via the White Papers introduced by the press or government's publications. However, the DFE was able to open its door further to outsiders to involve more diverse opinions and demands. A greater involvement of outsiders in ACE policy-making is a democratic current and can reflect the characteristics of ACE policy. After the DFE had increased its power in policy-making, it was required to provide more opportunities for policy participation. The DFE needed to consider how to involve relevant outsiders in ACE policy-making according to different conditions such as the aims of policy, the levels of policy, the costs of policy participation and so forth.

**An open-systemed participation in ACE policy-making is highly demanded.**

With the stress on learning as a right, ACE is seen as the service for all adults, especially when the provision has become much more vocational. Due to the above characteristic, ACE policy-making is quite public; namely, it has a close relationship with the public. In terms of the process of national ACE policy-making, the DFE was not the *sole* policy-maker but had to interact with other departments like the previous Department for Employment, with influential professional organisations like NIACE and with major representative bodies like FEFCs. As the analyses in chapter 4 have noted, there were different models of studying British policy-making. But, the pluralist model has been highly demanded in terms of descriptive practice and prescriptive expectation. From the findings of empirical data at stages 1 and 2, we have found the partners of DFE's ACE policy-makers changed. DFE's ACE policy-making had to be seen as a process that was operated in an open system. Most different samples including administrators in the DFE and LEAs, academics and practitioners have pointed out the fact of policy participation in ACE policy-making and the strong demand for policy participation. After the DFE had increased its powers in ACE policy-making directly or indirectly, a widened multiple policy participation with diverse stakeholders needs to be enforced. Furthermore, it is time for doing research upon the effectiveness of policy participation in ACE. Policy participation is not a panacea. It requires conditions such as participant's competence and timing to achieve the objectives.

The process of the DFE's policy-making could be included in the three stages of systems theory. Analysing problems, plans, and priorities in the DFE was the input stage. In the throughput stage, policy formulation in the DFE contained seven phases: refinement of objectives and problems, analysis of information, forming policy options, forecasting probabilities, assessment of consequences, coordination and consultation, and ordering preferences. The output stage comprised determination of policy and execution of policy in the DFE. According to the different phases in the DFE's policy process, above all in the input and throughput stages, it is helpful for the DFE to open its door to multiple information sources to develop and formulate policy.

In terms of a micro understanding of the DFE's ACE policy-making, systems theory is not sufficient. In this complicated process, systems theory's sequentialisation of policy-making in the DFE seems a bit rational and simplified. Especially, systems theory provides less information about the throughput. The black box of the DFE's ACE policy-making is still quite secret. Systems theory could be helpful for a macro systematic analysis of the DFE's ACE policy-making. For a micro understanding, a multiple-oriented approach connecting other methods would be much more helpful.

### **9.3 Findings related to the changing ACE**

The researcher carried out an empirical study, applying systems theory to explore the demands and factors affecting national ACE policy-making in England and Wales. The empirical study was based on the literature review and the analytical framework, and was conducted through data collection in two stages. Data were firstly collected through visits, interviews, and a questionnaire survey in person at stage 1. They were used as the basis for data collection at stage 2. Further data were collected via a larger-sample questionnaire survey by post and interviews at stage 2. Empirical data were analysed through statistics and comprehensive discussion to test the raised hypotheses.

#### **Results of testing hypotheses**

Eleven hypotheses were raised in accordance with research questions and the analytic framework and then seven were tested via the empirical data analysis. The results of testing were presented in Table 9.1.

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**Table 9.1** Results of testing hypotheses

Hypotheses	Accepted/Rejected
1. Factors affecting national ACE policy-making can be classified into five groups.	Accepted
2. National ACE policies can be grouped.	untested
3. Different factors have different interpretations of national ACE policies.	Accepted
4. Different people rank national ACE policies differently.	Partly accepted
5. Different people rank factors affecting national ACE policy-making differently.	untested

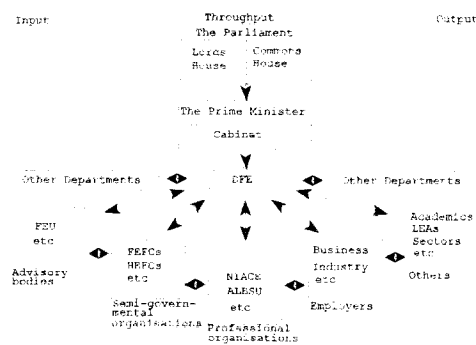
As Table 9.1 shows, there were five hypotheses tested. Two were accepted, one hypothesis was partly accepted and two were untested. The hypotheses about the relationship between people's demographic variables and national ACE policies and classification of national ACE policies were untested because of the sample's misunderstanding of the questionnaire. Only one dimension about the relationship between people's demographic variables and factors affecting national ACE policy-making was accepted. The result implies that people's demographic variables have a less important relationship with the influential factors.

### **A summary of main findings**

#### ***The DFE's ACE policy-making***

In terms of systems analysis, as Figure 4.6 lists, the DFE's ACE policy-making was focused on the throughput stage, or so-called 'black box'. In this research, this black box has been disclosed via the literature review, above all the chapter 5, and interviews at stage 2. Although the collected information is still insufficient, the DFE's ACE policy-making in the throughput stage could be shown as Figure 9.1.





**Note.** 1 DFE has been merged with the Department of Employment  
 2 FEU has been merged in Further Education Development Agency  
 3 ALBSU has changed name to The Basic Skills Agency

**Figure 9.1** The DFE's ACE policy-making in the throughput stage.

Figure 9.1 presents the DFE's ACE policy-making in the throughput stage. It also shows the relationships between the DFE with other central governmental departments, with the cabinet, with major relevant organisations of ACE and with possible influence resources. In terms of system analysis, after inputs issues, demands, needs and objectives which may have diverse origination such as from the Ministers, civil servants, pressure groups, MPs, and so on, the DFE might develop its policy proposals at the throughput stage in a consultative process with governmental departments and nongovernmental organisations. It has to be emphasised that the three stages of policy-making are based on systems theory for the purpose of analysis and discussion. In practice, it is difficult to draw the lines between different stages. There could be activities conducted at the same time. Accordingly, the DFE's ACE policy-making at the throughput stage could be divided into two dimensions: inside the governmental departments and outside the governmental departments.

#### Inside the governmental departments

The DFE was a department of the central government. Inside the governmental departments, the DFE might have parallel and up-down interaction. In parallel interaction, the DFE might cooperate and interact with other departments such as with the previous Department of Employment and Department of Trade and Industry on training, with Home Office on adult basic education for immigrants and with Treasury on budgets. This is also the main reason

why the DFE and Department of Employment were merged into the Department for Education and Employment to make the link easier in 1995. In up-down interaction, the DFE might receive the directions from the Prime Minister who is the leader of the cabinet. As to the whole cabinet, it could be influenced by the Parliament which contains the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Parliament might affect the DFE's ACE policy-making via debates and modifications, especially the House of Commons.

#### Outside the governmental departments

Outside the governmental departments, the DFE might consult with or establish a partnership with diverse organisations. In ACE policy-making, as this research has found, there were five groups of possible influential organisations. These were advisory bodies, semi-governmental organisations, professional organisations, employers and others. Among the advisory bodies, or called 'Think Tanks', the FEU played an important role. It was merged in Further Education Development Agency. It might give advice and recommendations to the DFE and receive its directions. Semi-governmental organisations mainly were the FEFCs and HEFCs. These two bodies have become more powerful and influential in the DFE's ACE policy-making, particularly the FEFCs. Although they might have their own policy, mostly they received the DFE's directions and guidelines. They also provided advice and suggestions to the DFE. Professional organisations, or called 'pressure groups', mainly were the NIACE and ALBSU. ALBSU has changed its name to The Basic Skills Agency. Even though these two organisations received the DFE's grants, their role was like a pressure group, especially the NIACE playing a broad and influential part in ACE. Employers of business and industry have become more significant since the DFE's market-oriented ACE policy-making. Their influences also passed through the members of different bodies such as the semi-governmental organisations. Other influence resources which might affect the DFE's ACE policy-making included academics, LEAs, ACE sectors, practitioners, the public and others. Some of these influences might be passed through the memberships of professional organisations or advisory bodies. Comparatively, this group had less impact upon the DFE's policy-making. These five groups might have interaction and influence between each other. For example, the FEFCs kept a close relationship with the NIACE. Practitioners might have

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impacts upon the FEFCs through the NIACE in which they were members. Academics might cooperate with employers and make employers pass through their ideas in different occasions or make advice and recommendations via research to the DFE.

Five groups might have impacts upon different fields of ACE. Advisory bodies like the FEU generally covered the whole ACE. The FEFCs mainly focused on vocational and qualifying courses and adult basic education. The HEFCs were responsible for ACE at higher education level known as University extension. The NIACE had interests in the whole ACE. After the DFE drew more attention to practical ACE, the NIACE has increased its lobbying on continuing learning for the disadvantaged such as women, the aged, the unemployed and the disabled etc. The ALBSU was mainly in charge of adult basic education. Employers might concern the whole ACE but they were much more likely involved in further education which was more vocational orientation. LEAs had the major responsibility in serving liberal ACE and might have influence in this field. Other groups might carry out their impacts according to their interests and concerns which might be very diverse.

As indicated in Figure 9.1, the DFE's ACE policy-making basically had a pluralist process but it was expected to extend its partnerships. In the process of the DFE's ACE policy-making, semi-governmental organisations and employers were much more influential because of the trend towards centralisation of administration and its economic targets. Mainly because of this trend, there has been demands for participation in the DFE's policy-making. As Figure 9.1 lists, there are diverse organisations associated with ACE policy-making. Therefore how to keep a close relationship with major institutions to get into the real world of ACE and to set up a helpful partnership with necessary partners to achieve the successful ACE policy-making were both significant tasks for the DFE. This link was also helpful for bridging the gap between the DFE's and its outsiders' policy agendas.

Figure 9.1 needs to be further analysed through more empirical studies. As highlighted earlier, systems theory is insufficient to explore the micro process of the DFE's ACE policy-making. The understanding calls for the application of different approaches. Additionally,

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the relationship between the DFE with its possible partners in ACE policy-making was complex and it was quite difficult to show the specific positions of different partners in this process. Figure 9.1 may change because of the aims of policy, the contents of policy and the intentions of the DFE. It requires further research via more approaches to make the picture of the DFE's ACE policy-making clear.

### ***Factors affecting national ACE policy-making***

Twenty influential factors in five groups were investigated. Learner and Economic factors were ranked as the major influential factors, followed by the Political factors. As to each factor in the five groups, different rankings have also been shown.

### ***Demanded national ACE policy priorities show a clear trend of learner-orientedness.***

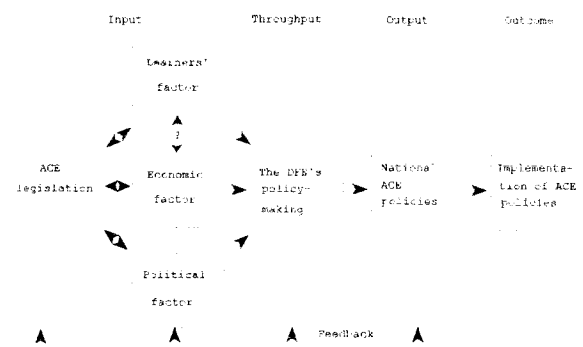
ACE policies that can support adult learning are mostly demanded. ACE is seen as a basic right for all adults. When the DFE has paid much attention to vocational ACE provision, that ACE is a basic right cannot be overlooked, especially for the disadvantaged. Services and supports like fundings and credits for adult learning are particularly demanded.

## **9.4 A feature and a future**

According to the findings of this research, British ACE policy-making based on the DFE's leadership has shown a feature, a picture of current and developing ACE situations. There have been some debates on ideas and practices regarding how to produce ACE in this country. Policy-makers of national ACE, led by the DFE followed by the FEFCs, HEFCs and other partners, have faced some arguments which need to be clarified and resolved. At this critical time, it is significant for national ACE policy-makers to fulfil their role satisfactorily and successfully. Their performance would directly impact the future of ACE in Britain. It is time for national policy-makers to develop a better future of ACE when facing the current and developing situations of ACE.

Figure 9.2 is intended to show a feature of British ACE policy-making.

## Chapter 9 Conclusions and Suggestions



**Figure 9.2** A feature of ACE policy-making in England and Wales

Figure 9.2 describes the feature of ACE policy-making in England and Wales through systems theory's three stages: input, throughput and output. At the input stage, three major influential factors are listed. The Learner, Economic and Political factors have been found to have most influences according to the research. They are major influential factors that national policy-makers led by the DfE have to consider when formulating policy. Since ACE legislation can form the regulations and guidelines of administration, it is another influential factor to policy-making. Legislation is usually intended to provide a context for ACE policy-making which can reflect the practical situations like in economy, politics, and society through its contents. Legislation therefore can be the guardian to protect ACE. It can also be a mediator to deal with the different influences of those factors. Thus, there is interaction between ACE legislation and the Learner, Economic and Political factors. At the throughput stage, ACE policy-making is conducted under the leadership of the DfE. At this stage, there is a political process between different partners. The process is mostly focused on how to respond to the influence factors in the input stage to policy formation. At the output stage, a national ACE policy is determined and prepared to be carried out. After the implementation of policy, outcomes of national ACE policy-making will be created. Those outcomes can be applied to modify the previous stages and become the starting point for further new policy-making.

Accordingly, there are thorny challenges that national ACE policy-makers have faced and have to resolve.

### **Interact, conflict or balance?**

#### ***Interact***

We have found that the Learner factor supported by the Economic factor was ranked as a major influential factor affecting national ACE policy-making. The importance of factors relating to adult learners has been the consensus between national ACE policy-makers and the majority of people. The importance of Learner factor has been supported by the Economic factor eg learning for economic reasons like upgrading personal skills and getting jobs and qualifications has been the common target of most adult learners and national ACE policy-makers. There have been interaction between the Learner and Economic factors here. For adults who learn for economic reasons, they have the same target with the DFE in which ACE policy agenda has been mostly guided by the economic targets.

#### ***Conflict***

However, for adults who do not learn for economic reasons, their motivation may be affected by DFE's policy orientation. Actually, they are losing learning resources. This group of adults may learn for its own sake or for psychological satisfaction instead of practical reasons. They usually select the liberal education courses which have been more marginalised. But, there is an argument saying adults who learn for personal recreational purposes have to fund by themselves. It is impossible for the state to spend money to help them (Professor Duke). Therefore, there has been a conflict here. Provision for economic reasons is based upon the DFE's concept of vocationalism. ACE is intended to promote personal skills, British competitiveness and workforce training. Vocational ACE has been expected to improve economic development (Gelpi, 1980; Tuijnman, 1992). In terms of the model of social policy, this is a market model. People who emphasise the learning right and advocate that the DFE has to raise more funding for liberal ACE basically refer to the social welfare model. For those who are radical, their idea is similar to the social redistribution model, or say, the radical model. Ball (1997) also points out that there is a basic tension at the heart of educational policy research between a commitment to the pursuit of efficiency and a commitment to the pursuit of social justice. Thus, there is a debate between ideas of the

market model and the social welfare model or the radical model (Else, 1986; Jarvis, 1993; Quigley, 1993).

### ***Balance***

To make a balance between the influences of the Learners and Economic factors is necessary for national ACE policy-makers. Education is for the whole person and for being, as Professor Jarvis emphasised. It would be grossly shortsighted to regard work-related education that meets the needs of industry and business as the only one of any importance (Elsdon, 1994). When the growing tendency to base more and more aspects of social affairs on the notion of consumer rights rather than upon citizen rights involves more than a move away from public-provided system of state education towards individual schools competing for clients in the market place (Whitty, 1994), it is important for national ACE policy-makers to clarify further if ACE is a consumer right or a citizen right. If ACE is a consumer right, it is the right for people who are able to consume in terms of social economic or educational background. If ACE is a citizen right, it is the right for everyone no matter how different in their background. Although ACE is not compulsory education, it could be people's learning right (UNESCO, 1985). ACE has multiple functions which are similar to that adults have diverse learning motivations. The market-oriented function should not be the sole target of ACE. People have personal interests which they wish to pursue for their own satisfaction and development, ranging from astronomy to embroidery, from woodwork to chamber music, from philosophy to football and dressmaking (Elsdon, 1994). Thus, ACE's learner-oriented or client-oriented function cannot be ignored.

Mr Kirwan and Mr Kershaw at the Further Education Branch also indicated that the DFE was facing the following issues:

- (1) Can the achievement of the Department's objective and the development of a learning society be left to 'the market', or are there steps which Government should take? If so, what are they?
- (2) What is the proper role of employers? How can Government influence that role? Should it seek to do so?
- (3) Will employers become less important/influential as more people become self-employed? If so, what are the consequences?

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(4) How can Government encourage individual commitment to learning?

The DFE had started thinking about the above significant and thorny issues. These issues could only be resolved through further studies of the theories and practices of ACE with a broader perspective. The DFE was also expected to make a balance of the provision between vocational ACE and liberal ACE. However, today the influence of the Economic factor is quite strong, especially under the support of the Political factor and merges into a powerful influential resource. How to get the balance right? Maybe 'walking in the middle way' would be a better choice. When the market model leads the influence, national ACE policy-makers need also to refer to the social welfare model to respect and protect the right of learning. To make and to keep this balance is one of the priority tasks national ACE policy-makers have faced. There are different sources of the political influence, but political parties are the major ones. Although some researchers argued that the difference between the Conservative and Labour Parties in educational policy is not obvious (Evans, 1983; Lawton, 1992), the influences on ACE due to the long-term leadership of the Conservative Party have been indicated. Since Mr Tony Blair became the leader of the Labour Party in 1994, he has shown an aggressive attempt to reform British education. Although there are arguments that the Labour Party has less interest in ACE because its supporters are mostly labours who are not the majority in ACE (Professor Ball). Regardless of political party in offices, the power structure is the same (Professor Jarvis). Political power may provide an opportunity to make this balance between the Learner and Economic factors' influences on national ACE policy-making. The possibility will be explored latter.

### **Orientation of the DFE's ACE policy-making**

After influential resources at input stage have been transferred into the throughput stage, the political process led by the DFE was significant for achieving different goals. The DFE faced some tasks when leading relevant partners in national ACE policy-making.



***How to rank the priority of policy orientation?***

At this critical point of ACE development, there have been different voices discussing the DFE's policy. Facing these diverse arguments, debates and demands, how to rank different opinions and priorities of policy would be a significant and thorny task for the DFE. When there were different ideas in debate, say, the market model and the social welfare model or the radical model, the DFE was suffering from the question about whether to adopt a learner-oriented (learner-centred) or a market-oriented (market-centred) ACE policy-making. As the findings in this research showed, ACE policies that directly contribute to adults' lifetime learning have been mostly demanded by the majority people. At the same time, the DFE also highlighted the increase of adults' lifetime learning, particularly relating to the economic targets. Therefore, how to realise adults' needs and use them as a basis to develop ACE policy, connecting to other's goals, could be a starting point.

***How to find a suitable policy-making style?***

A suitable ACE policy-making style needs to be developed. In the political process, the DFE was the leader of ACE policy-makers. How to fulfil this role via a helpful policy-making style is crucial. Although the British government has increasingly centralised educational policy-making (Jarvis, 1993), the international trend of decentralisation of educational administration cannot be ignored. Although the DFE also used a basic pluralist process of policy-making in education, this style could be further enhanced. Although the pluralist-style policy-making is not the sole and perfect style for ACE, because of ACE's characteristics of diversity, it would be comparatively suitable. Thus, in the political process of ACE policy-making, different voices from back benchers, opposition parties, colleagues and civil servants, pressure groups, employers, academics, ACE organisations and sectors and adults would be useful when the DFE made ACE policy according to the need of different policies. As discussed before, there are contradictory pressures and influences which operate within the state and that a more subtle approach to policy-making analysis is needed (Bradley, 1997).

### **A satisfactory policy output and an evaluative outcome**

#### ***A satisfactory policy output***

This research found that national ACE policies regarding adult learners like access and learner support are widely desired. The result shows that the majority people are concerned about learning resources. Referring to this evidence, national ACE policy-makers have to consider how to decide the priority between demands, resources, national targets and relevant policies. A satisfactory policy output would be helpful for following policy implementation. However, it is a challenging task to generate satisfactory national ACE policy after the political process and involving different influence resources.

#### ***An evaluative policy outcome***

Policy outcome is the result of policy implementation. The work of national ACE policy-making does not end after the output of policy. The outcome of one policy could become a starting point of the following policy-making. Therefore, the policy outcome should be fully applied and goes back to the prior stages and gives feedback to have an evaluation or modification. Feedback of policy outcome could make national ACE policy-making form a cyclical process. Accordingly, in order to make use of the outcome of policy, the DFE needed to recognise its significance and kept a sensitive attention via collecting the variety responses of national ACE policy in different dimensions. The DFE could arrange responsible civil servants to do this work or establish a partnership with academics and pressure groups. After the responses have been collected, they need to be analysed further and then applied to form feedback to evaluate the prior input, throughput and output. To improve each stage's work should be the major purpose of the above evaluation.

### **Updated ACE legislation**

As Figure 9.2 lists, ACE legislation can be one of the influential resources at the input stage. ACE legislation at least has two kinds of functions. The negative function is to protect adult learning with legal regulations. The positive function is to become a guideline to show the direction of ACE policy-making. When national policy-makers develop ACE policy, they have to obey the regulations of legislation to fulfil its goals and follow its guidance and

recommendations. Therefore, ACE legislation could influence national ACE policy-making. ACE legislation also needs to provide ACE with a much clearer status, to decrease or to clarify the debate of different ideas and then show national ACE policy-makers a clear direction to form policy. If ACE legislation cannot meet the updated demands, it needs to be revised or new legislation has to be enacted. It is significant for the DFE to give ACE a clear status in the legislation.

The future of ACE policy-making has been discussed. Some tough tasks have been indicated too. For the DFE/DfEE, it is time to take actions and to develop the future of ACE policy-making. The researcher further raises the following suggestions to indicate the possible direction for the ACE's future in England and Wales.

### **9.5 From ACE to lifelong learning**

In terms of lifelong learning, ACE is the basic stem to continue an individual's learning from the age of 16 to the end of life and to link learning before 16 to form a process of learning from womb to tomb. In addition, through ACE, adults can learn necessary competencies to teach their children. That would be helpful to begin one's learning from family before going to school. Namely, learning before school education depends most on family education provided by parents who can enhance their own ability to teach children via ACE. Thus, for everyone, home is the first school and parents are the first teachers. For adults themselves, ACE is able to be employed to continue their lifelong learning. For their children, ACE can help adults to offer better pre-school education to start children's lifelong learning as soon as possible. No matter what the focus of national ACE policy is, that learning is adult basic right through the whole life cannot be ignored. No matter what kind of function of ACE has been emphasised, that learning can bring a variety of benefits, in terms of different levels of individual, society and nation, cannot be forgotten. No matter which political party is in power, the significance of ACE and its potential contributions to lifelong learning cannot be overlooked.

### **New ACE policies from the new Government**

The link between ACE and lifelong learning to extend the learning process has been reinforced by the DFE/DfEE's national policy-making. As showed previously, before the end of the last Conservative Government, the idea of lifetime learning had been shown in its national educational policy papers and on its policy agendas. For example, the year, 1996, was the European Lifelong Learning Year and there were national lifelong learning policies proposed in the member countries including the UK (Cresson, 1996). This trend of educational policy focus did not change after the Labour party won the general election in May of 1997. As demonstrated in the literature review, there are differences in political ideologies between the Conservative and Labour parties and the differences can be reflected in educational policies. Comparatively speaking, the Labour party pays more attention to the equal educational opportunity for the disadvantaged. ACE is usually seen as an important instrument for the disadvantaged to attain a higher career achievement no matter in the view of remedial perspectives or practical purposes. Therefore, as Tony Blair emphasised in his election competition arguments, the focus of Labour party's policy is education, education and education. After Tony Blair took his power from John Major and became Prime Minister, the emphasis of education has been gradually getting clear. In terms of ACE, according to the Labour party's policy agenda, the focus of lifelong learning that is based on and continued from the previous Conservative Government can be easily found in recent national educational policy-making.

The Labour Government's lifelong learning policies are shown in the Green Paper called "The learning age: A renaissance for a new Britain". The Green Paper was developed through a consultative process by the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning set up in May 1997. As the name of the Green Paper has implied, the Labour Government is trying to improve Britain's achievement and competitiveness via lifelong learning for everyone. As Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, says that "In our hearts we know we have no choice but to prepare for this new age, in which the key to success will be the education, knowledge and skills of our people. Learning is the key to prosperity - for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole. The

Learning Age will be built on a renewed commitment to self-improvement and on a recognition of the enormous contribution learning makes to our society" (DfEE, 1998). The policy targets shown here are similar to those in the White Paper of the European Lifelong learning Year. Learning has been seen as a basic right for everyone to achieve a diversity of purposes. As R. H. Fryer, Chair of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, has pointed out, Britain has faced issues and challenges of the "risk society". Learning opportunities and achievements can constitute a key resource in helping people to deal with increasing uncertainty, dislocation and change. The following educational tasks therefore are significant in the Learning Age: raising children's achievement in schools, giving people basic and transferable learning skills, giving people skills for the modern labour market, tackling unemployment, securing employers' commitment to lifelong learning, and conducting the role of universities and colleges in the Learning Age (Fryer, 1998). The targets of the Green Paper show a potential trend of the Labour Government's national educational policy-making in ACE and lifelong learning.

It seems that the Green Paper is helpful for improving the balance between the debate on ACE's functions through enhancing the ideas of learning opportunities and learning benefits. The framework of the Green Paper is based upon six key principals: investing in learning to benefit everyone, lifting barriers to learning, putting people first, sharing responsibility with employers and the community, achieving world class standards and value for money, and working together as the key to success. The contents of the Green Paper are included in six chapters: the individual learning revolution, investing in learning, learning at work, realising the learning age, ensuring standards, quality and accountability, and recognising achievement (Fryer, 1998; NIACE, 1998). Referring to what has discussed in the thesis, the Green Paper has paid attention to individual's learning right and opportunity which have been advocated by the radical and social welfare models. It also does not ignore the potential economic functions of continuing learning that has been argued by the market model. The phenomena may result from that the Green Paper is the product of consultation between different relevant stakeholders like academics, pressure groups and employers. It has a strong characteristic of compromise. Besides, the Green Paper in some sense also reflects the

demands of the current practices and of the developments in future. For example, the demands of more learning opportunities, of higher standards and of a flexible system to recognise the learning achievement have all found in this thesis. The Green Paper actually reflects some trends in recent British ACE policy-making and tries to conclude the debates on ACE's functions via the topics of lifelong learning in which ACE has a crucial part to play. The relationship between ACE and lifelong learning therefore has been indicated and made link closely.

There is much work to explore on the way for the Labour Government. As Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, has noted, "the Green Paper is intended to start a national debate about how we can, together, realise the Learning Age" (DfEE, 1998). It can be used to be a basis for further discussion for the Government to collect much more information. The process is typical in British educational policy-making, as discussed in chapter 5, and is helpful for following policy formation. So far, there have been responses from different perspectives. For instance, there was disappointment at the down-grading from a White to a Green Paper. Also, as McNair (1998) argued, there are some questions found in the Green Paper. It does not deal with issues of citizenship and culture. It is weak on local and regional planning and collaboration. There is widespread anxiety about guidance. It seems timid in achieving the level of NVQ2. It does not answer how expensive and time-consuming it will be to realise the fully inclusive vision. In terms of guidance, Watts (1998) also feel disappointed because the hope that the Green Paper would provide the strategic breakthrough regarding lifelong learning access to guidance, in support of lifelong learning and lifelong career development for all, has been dashed. The Green Paper may have the right analysis, but what about implementation (Ely, 1998)? For establishing a system of credit accumulation, how to link the progression of different routes like further education, higher education, and adult education is waiting to be formulated (Stott, 1998). When there have been concerns and criticisms on over market-driven ACE policy-making, how to run the University for Industry in a broader perspective that does not limit the function of learning in workplace? When learning at work has been stressed, to enrich learning in other living places for all has also to be enhanced such as at family and different

levels of schools. And, although setting up the individual learning account is a new idea, its effects is still on the way to be examined. There are many issues to be discussed on the basis of the Green Paper. Hence, the Green Paper is not the end of policy consultation but the start of policy discussion.

### **The vision for a learning society**

To set up a learning society is the goal of the Learning Age proposed by the Green Paper. The goal has also been listed in the White Paper of the European Lifelong Learning Year. It becomes again the final target of the Green Paper. As Fryer (1998) concludes, the vision of the Learning Age is towards the learning society. In a learning society, all people have fruitful opportunities and resources to achieve diverse targets through lifelong learning. To create a learning society has become a growing consensus in the goal of educational reform. Van Der Zee (1991) raises five criteria for the development of a learning society: (1) the need to broaden the definition of learning (education as a dimension of society); (2) the need to redirect the goal of learning (growth towards completeness); (3) the need to go to beyond learning and instruction (increasing collective competence); (4) the need to foster autonomy in learning (self-education); (5) the need to stress a political approach to learning (the right to learn). Edwards (1995) lists three characteristics of learning society as follows: (1) the learning society as an educated society; (2) the learning society as a learning market; (3) the learning society as a learning networks. Compared with the action plans and targets shown in the Green Paper, we can see the intentions of it to achieve a learning society. For example, it proposes to increase individual's learning opportunities via University for Industry and learning account at different places. A learning market thus is to be developed to meet various learning needs. Learning right is protected and learning how to learn (self-education) is also one of the targets in the Paper. The system of credit accumulation is helpful to connect different routes that can offer lifelong learning to form learning networks. As to the third point, Van der Zee (1991) raised, increasing collective competence, is less mentioned in the Green Paper, which McNair (1998) and Rae (1998) have also pointed out. Generally speaking, the goal of achieving a learning society is obvious in the Green Paper.

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Although to establish a learning society has been shown in the Green Paper, some issues are there to be further dealt with. A learning society is a society in which an individual has equal learning right and fruitful learning resources. It sounds like a paradise and seems to be an ideal society which is aimed at. As findings in the thesis, in terms of ACE, though learning for disable adults has been emphasised such as in the FHEA, the equality of education is still not good enough. Other causes such as gender, age, residence place, educational and vocational backgrounds may become the barriers to learning. This is the reasons why to lift the learning barriers is one of the major targets of the Green Paper. After we have found that the influences of economic factors are strong and there are many impacts from the market and workplaces, how to combat the exclusion of learning opportunities because of the focus on practical functions of education? As Macrae, Maguire and Ball (1997) have emphasised, the learning society is everyone's society rather than for the elite. Issues of exclusion, polarization and social justice need to be kept in mind. Especially, when the idea of human capital theory has grown and the economism has dominated in ACE policy-making after the 1970s, as discussed in the literature review, how to avoid the over stress on the economic dimension of learning? Human and social capital perspectives are not sufficient to be the criteria to decide the distribution of lifelong learning resources and opportunities (Rees et al, 1997; Riddell et al, 1997). The viewpoint is not only applicable and important for people with disabilities but for all the people. In addition, when the learning society has become a goal of the Labour Government's educational policy-making orientation, its concept needs to be explored further. As Jarvis (1997) has pointed out, there are paradoxes of the learning society. He says that learning is always individual and society is always collective. When these two concepts are put together to become "the learning society", some ideological issues are therefore created. For a clearer vision of a learning society, more discussion and clarification on its concepts are needed by the Labour Government and those who are concerned about the issue.

Linking to the previous discussion and findings and the recent policy paper proposed by the Labour government, a potential clear picture of British ACE is on the way. Although there are still debates to be resolved, they also may bring some implications for ACE policy-



makers to consider the future of policy-making, particularly when the change of society is so quick. Referring to the findings of the literature review and empirical study, the author would like to raise the following recommendations to different stakeholders to conduct or research upon ACE policy-making.

## **9.6 Suggestions**

The researcher would like to provide suggestions to the DfEE, professional organisations and researchers who may do similar studies. The study of policy-making cannot be merely limited in theory but has to link to the practice. It is expected to make more contributions to improving the practice and the research of policy-making.

### **To the DfEE**

The researcher raises suggestions to policy-makers in the DfEE, combining what has happened in ACE and what people have demanded. What has happened in ACE is the practice in the real world. What people have demanded is the opinion expressed by different people associated with this field. They represent a variety of people in diverse dimensions, such as professionals, practitioners, and civil servants. There is a gap between what has happened in ACE and what people have demanded. The gap needs to be bridged by the DfEE and it has to be filled through policy-making. Since the FEFCs and HEFCs keep a close relationship with the DfEE and may accept influences of the DfEE, the DfEE here, in a broad terms, covers the FEFCs and HEFCs.

### ***Adopting a wider pluralist process of policy-making***

The DfEE has involved relevant organisations and people in its policy-making but there is still room for a wider participation. Greater participation is not only a world trend but is helpful for data collection. The DfEE needs to provide more opportunities to relevant outsiders. Through diverse interaction, more information for analysing problems, plans, and priorities and for developing policy options can be collected. In intra-departmental interaction, besides the Secretary of State, Ministers, and high level officials, more colleagues can be involved in policy-making. In inter-departmental interaction, the DfEE has

to consult with relevant departments actively, such as Treasury, the previous Department of Employment, and the Department of Trade and Industry, in addition to regular meetings. Besides the open discussions on the White Papers, the DfEE could invite more outsiders to take part in the process of policy formulation. In making national ACE policy, relevant organisations and people such as the FEFCs, HEFCs, FEU, NIACE, and ALBSU, academics, practitioners, employers and adult learners need opportunities to participate in different stages. If the time is available, adopting a pluralist process of policy-making would be helpful for the DfEE. The previous Education Secretary, Ms Gillian Shephard stressed on Channel 4 on 20 July 1994, when she was appointed to position, that cooperation and working together with people who are involved in this area would be her priorities. She would contact various Unions as soon as possible. The New Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, also says in the foreword of the Learning Age (DfEE, 1998), that the Green Paper sets out for consultation and starts a national debate. A pluralist process in educational policy-making through various debates and consultations has been emphasised.

***Formulating national ACE policy in a macro perspective at the beginning***

Since national ACE policy has close relationships with other policies, particularly those which cover the former Department of Employment and the Department of Trade and Industry, the DfEE cannot formulate ACE policy only from an educational perspective. For instance, policies related to workforce training of adults should be formed from an economic view as well. The contribution of policies to the national economic regeneration has to be considered. Policies associated with the aged should be made in a social perspective. The demographic trend in society has to be understood. Therefore, the DfEE needs to apply a macro view to form national ACE policy and avoid a narrow educational perspective, especially at the beginning. At the beginning of policy-making, collecting more information in a broad view and in various respects is significant for analysing problems and developing policy options. Through a macro view, the DfEE could consider policy-making in different dimensions more comprehensively.

***Applying systems analysis for making policy***

Systems analysis would be productive, if the DfEE makes policy through a pluralist process and in a macro perspective. The main strength of systems analysis is that it comprises various sources of influences, including the inner and outer context of policy-making. As discussed in chapter 5, policy-making in the DfEE could be divided into the three stages of systems theory ie input, throughput, and output. Particularly, in the input and throughput, a pluralist process and a macro view would be advantageous for analysing problems, plans, and priorities and developing policy options. Diverse and broad participation of outsiders is useful for the DfEE to collect more information in relation to problems, plans, and priorities. More discussions among different people would be beneficial for developing more policy options.

***Funding liberal ACE proactively***

Liberal ACE provision has been more marginalised after the 1992 FHEA. Although LEAs are still responsible for liberal education provision, the higher fees due to the shortage of funding have increased obstacles for adults who intend to register. Liberal education provision is a traditional service of ACE. Most importantly, there are people learning for its own sake or for nonpractical purposes. When the DfEE and many adults have focused on vocational and qualifying courses for practical reasons, those people who continue their learning for nonpractical purposes cannot be ignored. Their right of equal educational opportunity has to be protected. The DfEE needs positively to develop special funding initiatives based on the budgets available for supporting LEAs' liberal provision rather than passively waits for people's lobbying through LEAs to express their demand. Surely, adults who prefer liberal ACE have to pay the tuition fees to some extent. The point is that their learning right cannot be ignored due to the DfEE's focus on the economic targets. When achieving the learning society has become the policy focus of the DfEE, how to protect everyone's learning right is the basic condition. The learning right of people who prefer liberal ACE cannot be ignored.

***Paying more attention to ACE trends in the world***

The DfEE has to respond more rapidly to the ACE trends in the world. Britain is working hard to compete with its rivals in the global market. To know what other rivals are doing and what their advantages and disadvantages are and then to improve oneself are important strategies for winning in the competition. As a Chinese proverb says, 'Knowing one's own situation and that of the enemy guarantees victory in every battle'. Britain's late response to the American family literacy research, and to the Japanese partnership model, indicated that it may not be very concerned about the trends in the world. Most people in this research also pointed out that the trends in the world are not a very important factor affecting ACE policy-making. As a member of the European Union, Great Britain may keep a closed relationship with other member countries. But, Great Britain needs to extend its concerns on other countries outside Europe, particularly, in the trend of ACE. The DfEE could commission its Advisory Bodies such as the former FEU; professional organisations such as the NIACE and academics in this field doing research upon Comparative ACE to find out what other rivals are doing and then to promote British strategies. Not only should the work be continued all the time for keeping up-to-date with the progress of other rivals but it needs to be applied to exceed them and to lead the competition.

***Enhancing grassroots provision***

With the decline of liberal ACE, grassroots provision seems also to be fading. Provision based on local community is a strong demand of people. In this changing situation, people are worrying about whether their diverse needs could be satisfied via locally-based provision. It is one of the original functions of ACE to meeting locally-based needs. The maintenance of this function requires the support of the government's policy. The DfEE needs frequently to assess the diverse needs in local community by establishing partnerships with LEAs and voluntary sectors. If the DfEE leaves this work entirely to LEAs or voluntary sectors which have scant resources and powers, local needs may be ignored. After realising various local needs, the DfEE could design client-centred provision via the partnership with other professional organisations such as the NIACE, ALBSU and so forth. 'Back to grassroots' could be one of the focuses on the DfEE's ACE policy agenda.

***Linking the government's economic targets to those of adults' closely***

Economic orientation has been distinctive on the DfEE's ACE policy agenda. The NVQs, NETTs, and vocational and qualifying courses in the 1992 FHEA are all the indicators. During the time of economic recession and high unemployment, more adults have also studied for practical targets for competing in the labour market. The agreement between the DfEE's and adults' targets, covering the Learner and Economic factors, has obviously had an impact upon national ACE policy-making. The DfEE has to always keep in mind that the government's economic targets should be coherent with those of adults, and then these targets could be achieved effectively. Economic targets cannot be set up, based merely on the government's or employers' requirements. They also need to be formed from adults' point of view. For this purpose, the DfEE has to realise adults' and employers' demands through a pluralist discussion or empirical survey to develop and keep the economic targets and to meet different purposes. For example, establishing national adults' training targets may be a suitable starting point.

***Providing a free-of-charge entitlement***

Providing a free-of-charge entitlement was the only policy which has been ranked as extremely important. The NVQs are the main official entitlements. They are also the criteria of the NETTs. As the 1994 White Paper, 'Competitiveness' stresses, all existing NVQs would be reviewed by April 1996. In order to get some of the NVQs, adults have to invest a great deal of money. Since the cost is very high, a free-of-charge entitlement is strongly suggested. The DfEE could develop a pre-entitlement leading to the NVQs for adults which is free of charge. The DEE proposed 'learning credits' for young people in the 1994 White Paper. Perhaps the DfEE could extend this proposal to cover adults after evaluation of its effects and then develop it into a free-of-charge pre-entitlement leading to the NVQs, particularly for adults.

***Considering mostly demanded national ACE policies***

National ACE policies which can directly encourage adult learning are mostly demanded. Some of them have been implemented and some may be still under consideration. The DfEE

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need evaluate existing and proposed initiatives and take them into account for developing policy proposals. These highly demanded policies are as follows: offering improved advice and guidance service; offering low-charged childcare service in education institutions; broadening provision for mandatory grants and loans; improving the availability of concessionary fees; developing a system recognising adults' prior learning and experience; protecting equal opportunities in education for unemployed adults; reinforcing literacy and numeracy education; training adult educators; improving assessment of adults' learning; designing means for widening access to learning programmes; developing pathways and progression routes; developing suitable resource formulas. Some of these policies have been conducted or proposed by the government. For example, as the 1994 White Paper lists, the Government would expand the out of hours school childcare initiative to over 20,000 places in 1994/95.

### *Doing more research upon ACE policy-making*

As mentioned before, British study in ACE policy-making is limited. This field needs to be improved mainly by the DfEE's encouragement and support. Research upon ACE policy-making could not only assist the DfEE to understand the real world of ACE but also contribute to the development of policy alternatives. It is a quite economical investment to do research upon ACE policy-making. There are several ways to do research upon ACE. The DfEE could do it by its own advisory bodies or professional civil servants. The DfEE could cooperate with the local government to conduct its projects. The DfEE could give grants to professional organisations to do research. It also could fund ACE institutions to conduct studies. Another usual way for the DfEE is to commission academics in this field to carry out research projects through active funding or foundations for application. The selection of different ways depends on the objectives and contents of research topics. When much more research upon ACE policy-making has been conducted and the findings could be applied, the DfEE's ACE could be improved as well.

Since professional organisations of ACE play a significant part in national policy-making, the researcher would like to provide some suggestions to them.

## **To professional organisations**

### ***Bridging the gap between the DfEE and adults***

Professional organisations gather a group of people who have common concerns and interests. In terms of ACE, professional organisations could be the bridge between the DfEE and adults. They could pass the demands of adults to the DfEE; investigate barriers of adult learning for the DfEE; connect the communication between the DfEE and adults. Via this bridge, adults' demands could be passed to national ACE policy-makers and the DfEE's intentions could be understood clearly. Especially, when the DfEE has faced serious debates on ACE, professional organisations could provide information to help the DfEE to make a better decision.

### ***Supervising the DfEE's national ACE policy-making***

One of the responsibilities of professional organisations is to express the needs of adults in the DfEE's national ACE policy-making. For example, the NIACE actually has carried out a large function of this role. Professional organisations could sponsor more conferences or seminars to discuss ACE's 'hot topics' like certification, funding formula, lifelong learning and the learning society. After discussion, professional organisations could collect opinions as reports to lobby or persuade politicians, MPs, civil servants and the public via various approaches and media. They need actively participate in the DfEE's policy-making and to get any possible routes to have an influence. They could keep attention on the DfEE's ACE policy and supervise the DfEE. Professional organisations then could carry out the function of pressure groups.

### ***Forwarding the grassroots needs towards the DfEE***

Since professional organisations are organised by a group of members, they could collect different voices from the grassroots, compared with the DfEE. As showed in this research, the grassroots need is a strong demand by the majority of samples. When the DfEE and its partners like the FEFCs have paid more attention to the '*national*' level of ACE policy, demands of the '*local*' level have to be forwarded by professional organisations. Therefore, professional organisations need to keep a close concern and understanding of what happens

at the local areas and then bring the grassroots need to the public's forum of ACE and on the DfEE's policy agenda.

***Doing what the DfEE could not do***

The DfEE is one of the departments of the British government machine. Its function is restricted by the government's whole policy. Sometimes it is difficult to meet different demands from the grassroots. When the market model has grown its influences on national ACE policy-making, adult learning for the reason of social welfare could be promoted by professional organisations. Professional organisations could supplement this function which the DfEE is limited according to their financial competence. They could offer liberal ACE for adults, establish a partnership with voluntary sectors and ask for grants from the DfEE. As late Minister Tim Boswell stressed, the DfEE encourages voluntary sectors to provide learning for adults through partnerships. So, to establish a collaborative relationship with other sectors no matter whether they are statutory or voluntary would be an economical approach for professional organisations to do what the DfEE cannot do for adults.

**To researchers who will study similar topics.**

After carrying out this research upon national ACE policy-making in England and Wales, the researcher raises some suggestions for researchers who may study similar topics in the future. The researcher applied systems theory as a theoretical framework and collected empirical data in two stages mostly through interviews and questionnaire surveys. This approach could basically meet the research purposes and answer the research questions. In order to achieve more successful results, researchers could consider the following points to study similar topics.

***Applying case study as the research method***

Case study method can explore specific contexts in detail. Since the researcher aimed to get a general picture of the changing national ACE policy-making in England and Wales rather than to discuss some specific policies, the case study method was not utilised in this research. A possible limitation of this research is that it did not provide sufficient detailed



empirical discussion on the 'real' process of policy-making. This discussion was conducted via the literature review and interviews here. If researchers' purpose is on specific policy-making, case study may explore more information. For example, researchers could use the FEFC as a case and then study its role in national ACE policy-making through deep documental analyses, observations and interviews.

***Citing other theories as the theoretical framework***

Besides systems theory, there are other approaches available for analysing policy-making. As this research was intended to inspect the relationship between different parts of policy-making, via focusing on the environmental influences, systems theory was selected as the theoretical framework. But, the major limitation of systems theory is that its sequential stages are not detailed enough to provide more information about the political process. Other theories applied in studying British policy-making such as the political model, state model, pluralist model (all discussed in chapter 4) could be alternatives. A multiple-oriented approach can be more helpful. For instance, researchers could cite the state model and systems analysis to illustrate the DfEE's policy-making inside the cabinet. The focus would be on how policy proposals are negotiated in the House of Commons and its committees through an open systematic analysis.

***Selecting specific policies as the research topic***

Researching into specific policies may provide concrete findings. The researcher explored policy-making as a whole due to the purposes of this research. National ACE policies in England and Wales were discussed comprehensively. The advantage is that it gave us a whole picture; the limitation is that there was no deep discussion on each policy. When British ACE has been in change, it also produces many significant policy problems for studying. For example, researchers could select the NVQs or NETTs as a topic to explore the process of its formulation in terms of policy-making to find out where these qualifications or targets came from and how they became the official criteria. This would be an important and interesting topic.

***Designing the political process as a research variable***

The political process of policy-making is complex and significant. In this research, the political process via the DfEE was not an analysed variable so there was no empirical data collection and analysis. It was only discussed through the literature review and interviews. This 'black box' still seems mysterious. If researchers are more interested in the DfEE's political process in policy-making, they could design their studies with this as a variable; then apply different methods to collect empirical data for further analyses. For instance, they could sample civil servants in the DfEE or relevant departments such as the former Department of Employment with a questionnaire survey and interview high level policy-makers such as ministers.

***Choosing adult learners as the subsample***

Adult learners are the target group of ACE provision. Since this research focused on national policy-making which may not be a familiar matter to adult learners, they were not chosen as one of the subsamples. Therefore, the majority and target group had no opportunity to express their opinions in national ACE policy-making here. If researchers concentrate on policy-making at local level or institutional level, they could consider to include adult learners as a information source. If researchers do research upon policy-making in adult basic education, they should not exclude adult learners for data collection. For example, researchers could utilise a large sample questionnaire survey aimed at adult learners to collect data about their demands on literacy and numeracy education; then apply small sample interviews with adult learners for further analyses.

**Summary**

The chapter has concluded this research from its origination to suggestions. Reviewing major Reports and Acts and practices was used to understand the change of ACE in England and Wales. This provided a picture of what has happened in the real world. Systems analysis was applied as the theoretical framework to collect and analyse empirical data. The sample's responses gave us their viewpoints and demands on this field. Linking what has happened to what people have shown and demanded, the researcher has made recommendations to the

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DfEE and professional organisations on what could be done. What could be done may also show a trend of national ACE policy-making in England and Wales in the future. The researcher has also made suggestions to researchers who may do similar studies after examining the implementation of this research. These suggestions covered the methodology, the theoretical framework, the topic, the variable, and the sample. Examples were also given for illustration.

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## **Appendix A**

### **RECORD OF THE INTERVIEWS AT STAGE 1**

#### **1 The City Lit**

**Role:** Adult education centre

**Place:** London

**Date:** 8 12 1992 10.00-11.00

**Interviewee:** Governor's Training Coordinator

**Interviewer:** The researcher

1.1 Education for the elders is one of the main tasks of this centre.

1.2 National policy-makers have to consider the diverse needs of adult learners.

1.3 Courses for qualifications have become more popular.

#### **2 Kingsway Camden's College**

**Role:** Community college

**Place:** London

**Date:** 9 12 1992 10.00-11.30

**Interviewee:** Director of Community Access

**Interviewer:** The researcher

2.1 Adult education plays an important part in this college.

2.2 Young adults have increased recently.

2.3 One of the factors affecting adults' participation is the availability of accesses such as childcare.

#### **3 Cardiff Tertiary College**

**Role:** Further Education College

**Place:** Cardiff

**Date:** 10 6 1993 11.00-12.40

*Appendix A Record of the Interviews at Stage 1*

**Interviewee:** Director of Studies, Department of General Education.

**Interviewer:** The researcher

3.1 From the first of April this year, the college has become independent and mainly funded by the FEFC for Wales.

3.2 Because Wales is smaller than England, institutions have a closer relationship with the FEFC.

3.3 Administrators in the college would like to be involved in ACE policy-making at institutional or national level.

3.4 The principal of this college has opportunities to participate in ACE policy-making of the FEFC through various meetings.

3.5 Administrators in this college can express their opinions on policies on paper but those are not necessary accepted.

3.6 The FEFC has become a major policy-maker of ACE.

#### **4 Community Education Lewisham**

**Role:** Adult Education Centre

**Place:** London

**Date:** 15 6 1993 10.30-11.45

**Interviewee:** Director

**Interviewer:** The researcher

4.1 The centre is funded by the LEA and FEFC for England about half and half.

4.2 The centre gets accesses from the LEA and FEFC but the influences of LEA have declined.

4.3 The future of this kinds of community education centres have become uncertain after the taking effect of the 1992 FHEA.

4.4 The main problems of this centre at this moment are how to get service, survive and stability.

*Appendix A Record of the Interviews at Stage 1*

4.5 Directors of adult education centres have opportunities to take part in ACE policy-making of the LEAs.

4.6 Adult education is a significant part of education, in terms of ACE policy-making, the government has to give it a more important role.

**5 The Institute: Hampstead Garden Suburb**

**Role:** Adult Education Centre

**Place:** London

**Date:** 15 6 1993 15.00-16.20

**Interviewee:** Principal and Chief Executive

**Interviewer:** The researcher

5.1 The institute is a charity organisation. In character, it is a voluntary institution for community education.

5.2 The institute gets about 10% of grants from the LEA.

5.3 The FEFC gives more funds and its influence has got greater than the one of LEA.

5.4 At this moment, the problem of this institute is how to get more grants to offer better services.

5.5 The principal has opportunities to participate in the LEA's ACE policy-making.

5.6 About policy, it is important that the FEFC, LEAs and voluntary institutions should be more open for communicating and reorganising the objectives of ACE.

**6 Charles Keene College**

**Role:** Further Education College

**Place:** Leicester

**Date:** 22 6 1993 18.30-20.00

**Interviewee:** Community Education Organiser

**Interviewer:** The researcher

#### *Appendix A Record of the Interviews at Stage 1*

- 6.1 After the first of April this year, the college has become independent and there is a cooperation governors committee.
- 6.2 Different colleges can compete each other.
- 6.3 Policy-making of ACE has become more centralised. The government influences the FEFC and then the FEFC influences colleges.
- 6.4 People in community have less powers in ACE policy-making than before.
- 6.5 To get employment has become a main purpose of learners and the courses in colleges are affected by the training targets.
- 6.6 Adult learners who study nonvocational courses have to pay full fees.
- 6.7 At present, county council funds nonvocational courses for three years; however, after three years, no one knows what will happen.
- 6.8 The main problems of the college are how to get money, certainty and staffing.
- 6.9 The Director has opportunities to be involved in ACE policy-making of county council.
- 6.10 In terms of ACE policy-making, policy-makers have to understand that the chief purpose of education is to create educated people not only jobs.

#### **7 Askham Bryan College**

**Role:** Further Education College

**Place:** York

**Date:** 23 6 1993 11.00-12.15

**Interviewee:** Senior Manager

**Interviewer:** The researcher

- 7.1 The college is independent and is supported by the FEFC. It has no relationship with the LEA.
- 7.2 Courses in this college are vocational.
- 7.3 The problems of this college at present are how to reduce staff and teaching hours and to improve programmes management.
- 7.4 The FEFC evaluates the efficiency of this college by reports and surveys to decide funding.

*Appendix A Record of the Interviews at Stage 1*

7.5 About ACE policy-making, economic factors are significant and always affect ACE policy-making.

7.6 At the college level, senior executives have opportunities to participate in ACE policy-making.

## **Appendix B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SURVEY IN PERSON**

#### **Policy-making in Adult Continuing Education**

**Dear Sir or Madam,**

This survey is a part of research upon policy-making in adult continuing education. The results are only for academic research and not for making public. Please read the notes following and then complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much.

**Cheng-Yen Wang, Research Student,  
Institute of education, University of London**

#### **1 Notes**

\* **Adult continuing education(ACE)** means learning opportunities provided by all kinds of institutions for adults' continuing learning for different purposes.

\* **Policy-making** means the formation of policies about adult continuing education in centre or local government or institutions of ACE.

#### **2 Questionnaire(please tick one answer)**

\* **Sex** M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_

\* **Age** 18-24 \_\_\_ 25-34 \_\_\_ 35-44 \_\_\_ 45-54 \_\_\_ 55-64 \_\_\_ 65+ \_\_\_

\* **Occupation** Administrator in government department or  
institutions of ACE \_\_\_  
Tutor in university \_\_\_  
Official of professional organisation \_\_\_  
Adult educator in institutions of ACE \_\_\_  
Adult learner \_\_\_  
Other(please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

\* **Working place** London \_\_\_ Other areas in England \_\_\_  
Other(please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

\* **In your view, what level of organisation is the prime policy-maker in  
adult continuing education?**

central government\_\_\_ local government\_\_\_ institution\_\_\_ other(please list)\_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix B Questionnaire for the Survey in Person*

**\* In your view, how important are the following issues in policy-making in adult continuing education? (please rank by number from 1 to 6; eg 1= the most important)**

structure of ACE\_\_ course in ACE\_\_ funding of ACE\_\_ assessment of student\_\_ programme  
of ACE\_\_ accreditation of qualification\_\_ other(please list)\_\_\_\_\_

**Open questions**

**\* When national policy-makers form adult continuing education policies, what *factors* should they consider?**

**\* In your view, what are the *necessary conditions* of ideal policy-making in adult continuing education ?**

**\* Thanks for your contribution.**

**\* Please put it on the table for registration or return it to Cheng-Yen Wang.**



## Appendix C

### QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SURVEY BY POST

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#### Policy-making in Adult Continuing Education Questionnaire

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\*\*\*\*\*  
Dear Sir/Madam, 5 February 1994

This survey is a section of research for PhD. The research aims to explore the policy-making in adult continuing education in England and Wales. Your work has close relationship with adult continuing education so your participation will be very valuable. Please read the following definitions firstly and then complete the questionnaire carefully. When you finish, please send it back to whom passes you the questionnaire before 20 February 1994.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Cheng-Yen Wang, Research Student,  
Institute of Education, University of London

\*\*\*\*\*

1 Please refer to the definitions of terms in this survey.

\* **Adult Continuing Education(ACE)** means learning programmes provided by different institutions for adults' continuing learning.

\* **Policy** means a **national** plan or project of ACE formed by the Department for Education or Further Education Funding Councils.

\* **Policy-making** means the **formulation** of national policy in ACE by the Department for Education or Further Education Funding Councils.

2 The following have three parts of questions. Please tick(V) one answer to fill in each question.

2.1 Factors affecting the national policy-making in ACE.

\* **Note:** The following are five kinds of factors affecting the national policy-making in ACE. Please tick(V) one answer to indicate *how important you consider each factor is in influencing current national ACE policy-making*.

Not at all important 1	Not very important 2	Quite important 3	Very important 4	Extremely important 5
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*Example.* central Government's total educational budget.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------------

\* *Political factors.*

1. ideas of the political Party in power.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
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*Appendix C Questionnaires for the survey by post*

2. ideas of opposition Parties.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

3. demands of professional organisations of ACE.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

4. role play of the Further Education Funding Councils.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

5. influences of civil servants.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

*\* Economic factors.*

6. central Government's spending plans for ACE.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

7. demands for skilful workforce from employers.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

8. national economic condition for providing ACE.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

9. funding supports of enterprises for ACE provision.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

10. quality of manpower in the labour market.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

*\* Social factors.*

11. development of information technology used for ACE.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

12. demographic trends of society eg the increase of aged people.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

13. reorganisation of the social class structure.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

14. requirement for decreasing the unemployed.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

15. change of the living style of the public.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

*Appendix C Questionnaires for the survey by post*

*\* Educational factors.*

16. demand for increasing traditional liberal ACE.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

17. adult continuing education trends in the world.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

18. desire for cooperation between statutory and voluntary ACE sectors.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

19. influences of updated educational theories.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

20. transferability between ACE, post-16 and higher education.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

*\* Learner's factors.*

21. participation motivation of adults for learning.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

22. adults' demand on literacy and numeracy education.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

23. the diversity of adult learning needs.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

24. adults' economic ability to pay the fees for learning.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

25. demographic traits of adults eg gender and ethnic groups.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

\* Please *select and rank 10 most important factors* affecting national ACE policy-making *from above 25 ones by listing each item's number* below:

	Less important					More important				
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Item No	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

\* Please *supplement below other factors* affecting the national policy-making in ACE:

Appendix C Questionnaires for the survey by post

2.2 National policies in ACE.

\* Note: The following are national ACE policies being carried out or proposed. Please tick(V) one answer to indicate how important you consider each item is in current policy formulation.

Not at all important 1	Not very important 2	Quite important 3	Very important 4	Extremely important 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

Example. increasing educational provision for adults under 25 years old.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

1. disseminating experiential learning as teaching method.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

2. developing a system recognising adults' prior learning and experience.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

3. protecting equal opportunities in education for unemployed adults.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

4. reinforcing literacy and numeracy education.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

5. training adult educators.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

6. improving assessment of adults' learning.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

7. extending the present training credit scheme.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

8. providing a free-of-charge entitlement.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

9. offering improved advice and guidance service.

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

10. developing suitable resource formula.

*Appendix C Questionnaires for the survey by post*

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

11. designing means for widening access to learning programmes.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

12. offering low-charged childcare service in education instutions.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

13. providing work-based and workplace learning.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

14. developing pathways and progression routes.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

15. teaching environmental issues to adults.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

16. broadening provision for mandatory grants and loans.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

17. enlarging personal tax relief to cover the expenditure on personal learning.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

18. improving the availability of concessionary fees.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

19. developing a credit accumulation and transfer framework in ACE.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

20. promoting statutory/voluntary collaboration in provision for adults.

1 ☐                      2 ☐                      3 ☐                      4 ☐                      5 ☐

\* Please *select and rank 10 most important national ACE policies from above 20 ones by listing each item's number* below:

	Less important					More important				
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Item No	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

\* Please supplement below your desired national ACE policies:

*Appendix C Questionnaires for the survey by post*

**2.3 Personal information.**

**\* Your gender** M ☐ F ☐

**\* Your age** 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+ ☐

**\* Your occupation**

Educational administrator in the LEA ☐

Lecturer in higher education institution ☐

Administrator in professional organisation ☐

Adult educator in institution of ACE ☐; What subject do you teach\_

Other (please specify) ☐

Please state your role in your working place ☐

**\* Your place of residence**

England

London ☐ Metropolitan district ☐ County ☐

Wales ☐

\*\*\*\*\*

**\* Thank you again for your contributions.\***

## **Appendix D**

### **RECORD OF THE INTERVIEWS AT STAGE 2**

#### **1 DFE 1**

**Date:** 2 June 1994 11.00-12.20 **Place:** Further Education Branch, DFE

**Interviewee:** Mr Alex Kirwan, Team Leader of Further Education for Adults, Further Education Branch.

**Interviewer:** The researcher

#### **1.1 The role of FEFCs**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role of the new FEFCs in ACE after the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act?

**Mr Kirwan:** After the 1992 FHEA, the FEFCs have been given more money to serve ACE. They mainly provide the qualifying, vocational, and adult basic courses listed in Schedule 2. At present, further education colleges not only serve young adults but there have been more part-time adults studying in the evening. Respectively, LEAs provide courses except in the above three categories. Most are traditional nonvocational courses. LEAs also get money from the Government's funding but their main budgets are from the local taxes.

The FEFCs' basic role is to fund sectors providing ACE by setting up the funding formula. They have to evaluate the quality of provision and report to the DFE.

**The researcher:** Do the FEFCs have power to make policy? What is the relationship between the FEFCs and DFE?

**Mr Kirwan:** In theory, the FEFCs have the power to make their own policy. In character, FEFCs are quangos set up by the Government. They have representatives involved in the DFE's meetings. They do have a close relationship with the DFE. However, the relationship is not settled down but flexible in legislation.

## **1.2 Policy-making in the DFE**

**The researcher:** Would you please describe the process of ACE policy-making in the DFE?

**Mr Kirwan:** Generally, Ministers are the starting point and end of policy-making. When Ministers have a long term consideration, they ask officials to develop proposals and options and discuss where the policy should go, how to proceed and so forth. The White Paper is the final proposal of policy. The publication of the White Paper provides opportunities for discussion. As to the genesis of the White (or Green) Paper, I fear it is really not possible to generalise: Policy initiatives may come out of discussion at the most senior political level, ie Cabinet discussion, and many of these may be commitments made in the election manifesto of the governing party; but it is more likely that they would come from the initiative of Ministers or senior officials in any particular Government departments.

**The researcher:** In this process of policy-making, is there any involvement of outsiders such as professional organisations, advisory bodies or officials themselves?

**Mr Kirwan:** The process does include different people and discussion. Officials have opportunities to provide ideas and draft policies. This is a part of their job. The White Paper gives the public opportunities to discuss via the press. Ministers also actively consult with major professional organisations. For example, directors of the NIACE, ALBSU and Association of LEAs. Ministers take advice from the FEFCs as well.

As to the advisory bodies, there was a temporary committee, The Unit for Development of Adult Continuing Education. But, it was merged into the NIACE. The present one is the Further Education Unit. It has 13 full-time senior experts. Some of them sit in the FEFCs. The Unit plays a significant role in policy-making.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the DFE and other departments when the DFE makes policy? Do they enjoy effective interaction?



**Mr Kirwan:** Different departments have opportunities to communicate. Ministers have personal informal discussion when they need to. There is a ministerial committee that has a regular meeting per month. Since the DFE has a close relationship with the Department of Employment, there are permanent groups working together.

### **1.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** In your view, what factors have affected national ACE policy-making?

**Mr Kirwan:** The Government and the FEFCs are sensitive to adults' and training needs. However, the DFE focuses on a general framework for policy-making rather than on specific strategies for encountering problems. It is impossible for it to pay attention to and spend money on each specific problem. The resources are not enough. For example, there are about 50 officials in the Further Education Branch. They cannot deal with every problem.

The economic competitiveness of this country is a crucially influential factor affecting the Government's policy-making. Young adults and adults are expected to be qualified in the workplace.

### **1.4 National ACE policies**

**The researcher:** Some of the sample in my research doubted that there is 'national' ACE policy? What is your comment on this?

**Mr Kirwan:** Actually, there are national ACE policies. These people still applied an old idea. They supposed that adult education was merely recreational or remedial education for the working class as in the past.

**The researcher:** What is the priority on the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Mr Kirwan:** The recent White Paper has a summary of the DFE's ACE policy agenda. For instance, the DFE proposes to create a credit system for young people aged 16-18 for their

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upgrading or employment. Although it is still at the consultative stage, it is a current focus. The major policy on ACE was clearly stated in a public objective for adult further education: 'to increase participation by adults in further education and to raise levels of attainment to contribute to the Lifetime Learning National Targets for Education and Training'.

The context for this policy was the general recognition that the UK is facing a skills gap, ie, a gap between the skills of the workforce and the skills needed to maintain and improve our international competitiveness. This is, increasingly, less about job-specific skills and more about the 'core skills' of communication, application of number, IT competence, problem-solving and inter-personal skills which most workers will need. The National Curriculum is designed to encourage the development of these skills at school. However, it is increasingly recognised that there is also a need to upgrade the skills of those who have left full-time education and training, not least because they will comprise the majority of the workforce of the next ten to fifteen years.

**The researcher:** Liberal adult education is not a focus of the DFE's policy agenda. Do you know what the future of liberal adult education will be?

**Mr Kirwan:** In the future, vocational, qualifying, and adult basic education will still be the mainstream. As for liberal education, relevant organisations can get funding through lobbying on LEAs to provide liberal courses. Some higher education institutions, the WEA, Women Institutes also provide liberal courses for adults. In short, the future of liberal adult education is uncertain.

### **2 Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Birkbeck College**

**Date:** 9 June 1994 11.00-12.45 **Place:** Institute of Education

**Interviewee:** Ms Patricia Melville, Administrator at the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Birkbeck College

**Interviewer:** The researcher

## **2.1 The role of the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role of the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies after the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act?

**Ms Melville:** Liberal adult education has lost funding and resources. The funding bodies are changing from the PCFC and the UFC to the HEFC. The sole institution, say, the HEFC has to face a diverse system. Due to the situation, it may suffer from some problems.

The tradition has changed. The liberal mainstream has been challenged. Teachers have to turn their attention to available access, not only their teaching ideas and Learner needs. A lot of diversity will be lost. For example, people with high qualifications will lose interest; people without qualifications will ask for more courses. Our provision should show the access of vocation and qualification courses.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the Centre and the HEFC?

**Ms Melville:** Besides the funding, the relationship between the HEFC and the Centre is still not clear yet. Traditionally, the PCFC was responsible for vocational continuing education and the UFC for nonvocational continuing education. But, the HEFC comprises these two kinds of provision. It still has to consider how to play its role linking these two fields. The new system will run from 1995-1996. At present, it is hard to describe its role.

## **2.2 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** In your view, what factors have affected national ACE policy-making?

**Ms Melville:** Ideologies of the government and learners both have affected ACE policy-making. Traditionally, education has been for the elite and school education is the centre for teaching Victorian values and students how to be good citizens. Adult education is thought of as less academic. Adult educators are less professional and sometime they are described as educational workers.

The labour market is also a factor affecting the DFE's ACE policy-making. Adult education has become more practical. Employment and employers' needs have been the targets for continuing learning.

## **2.3 Demanded national ACE policies**

**The researcher:** In your view, what are the demanded national ACE policies?

**Ms Melville:** First, there should be learning opportunities for all people. ACE should be feasible. Second, the meaning of adult education has to be redefined. Adult education is not only for qualifications or vocational skills. Some people want to learn for its own sake. The direction of policy has to be changed. Finally, provision should be available in country areas. The resource distribution has to be equal.

## **2.4 Findings of the postal questionnaire survey**

**The researcher:** Why have more females stressed the importance of Learning access than males?

**Ms Melville:** Some reasons can be drawn for explaining this interesting finding. Women used to occupy a larger part of nonformal learning. They are the majority asking for learning accesses. There is a shortage of women competing in the labour market. They need more learning accesses for enriching themselves. Women want to return to learning to seek social relationships. For example, women who are divorced make friends via learning together with other partners.

**The researcher:** Why have more people aged 45-54 emphasised the importance of Learning access than those over 65?

**Ms Melville:** People aged 45-54 need more learning accesses for continuing education. They still have about 10 years of working life in the labour market. This age group is more likely to be unemployed. They want continuing learning to enhance their ability to compete.

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Comparatively, people aged over 65 have more learning accesses such as the University of the Third Age. The majority in the WEA and the Extra-Mural Centre are retired people.

**The researcher:** Why have people living in London ranked the importance of Learning access higher than those in English counties?

**Ms Melville:** Traditionally, people in London mostly value continuing learning. People in counties may encounter more obstacles to learning. There are many people who live in counties commuting to London for their learning. Inner London also provides more interesting and exciting provision.

### **3 FEU**

**Date:** 19 July 1994 14.00-15.30 **Place:** FEU

**Interviewee:** Ms Anna Reisenberger, Development Officer

**Interviewer:** The researcher

#### **3.1 The role of FEU in the DFE's ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role the FEU plays in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Ms Reisenberger:** The FEU is a research and advisory body. It is an independent institution led by a board of management. It undertakes a wide range of activities through its central and regional offices and works closely with other national training and education agencies. It keeps a close relationship with further education colleges and sometime evaluates the provision. Most of the time, it provides services. Guidance, advice, and information are offered to this field through published reports and bulletins, and via seminars and conferences. It spends a half, ie, 50% of its budget on adults over 19. The other half is for young adults from 16 to 19.

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The FEU conducts much research and makes suggestions to the government and colleges. Research is commissioned by government's departments or other organisations. Its suggestions concerning debates, needs, and problems may have influences on the DFE's policies. The DFE does seriously consider the FEU's suggestions and some of them are reflected in the DFE's policy-making. The chairman of the Unit has opportunities to participate in the DFE's policy-making. Senior officers also have regular meetings in the DFE. The DFE also issues directions and guidelines to the FEU through regular and informal meetings.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the FEU and FEFCs?

**Ms Reisenberger:** It is complicated because of two reasons. First, this Unit has changed and been funded by the FEFC since 1 April 1993. But nothing has really changed. The FEFC has more powers and controls funding to colleges. The FEU is more like an advisory body. The second reason regards the current situation of the FEU. The Unit is funded and commissioned to do research by the FEFC. We hope we have independent influences.

### **3.2 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** Do you know what factors have affected the changes in ACE policy-making in England and Wales?

**Ms Reisenberger:** The hierarchic ideologies and educational values of the government. They are not only associated with the ideologies of political parties. The government pays more attention to vocational courses, qualifications, and adult basic education. Economic reason is also a drive, such as for decreasing the unemployment, and more jobs for qualified people.

**The researcher:** Is the DFE's ACE policy-making influenced by Learner factors such as adults' participation motivation, and demands?

**Ms Reisenberger:** Many surveys on adult demands have been commissioned by the government. The findings showed that adults' demands and motivation are very diverse. Government's ideologies still have strong influences. For example, guidance, education or career, is a strong demand of most adults. The government does not respond to this very much because of its marketism. It thinks that adults have to pay for guidance. Although first-level guidance is free, adults have to pay their own fees. Most of them cannot afford it. In my view, the government's ideologies are more influential.

### **3.3 Findings of the postal questionnaire survey**

**The researcher:** Females have stressed the importance of Learning access more than males. Do you know what the possible reason is?

**Ms Reisenberger:** The reason is that females lack learning accesses. They may have more difficulties to gaining access; especially those who have children. For example, they have more family duties, they lack confidence, they require advice, and they need free childcare service.

**The researcher:** People living in London ranked the importance of Learning access higher than those in English counties. Do you know what the reason is?

**Ms Reisenberger:** Traditionally, the London education authorities provided many resources to serve ACE. Londoners had more learning accesses before. But they lack accesses now, especially in high unemployment areas. Some colleges have been closed in some boroughs. They cannot get used to the shortage of access. This is the reason why they ranked the importance of the learning access higher.

**The researcher:** People aged 45-54 emphasised the importance of Learning access higher than those over 65. Do you know what the reason is?

**Ms Reisenberger:** I am not surprised at this result. People aged 45-54 are more active in economic competition. They are still working. They need more learning. Comparatively, people over 65 do not highly worry about learning accesses.

### **3.4 National ACE policies**

**The researcher:** What is the priority on the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Ms Reisenberger:** I think to get a highly skilled workforce is the main priority of the DFE's policies. This priority is close to the economic targets. Employers have influences on the DFE's policy-making, such as via the NETTs and the NCVQs. Some employers are interested in general education. Some are more involved in workplace training for contribution to industry.

**The researcher:** In your view, what should be the priority of ACE policy in the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Ms Reisenberger:** I think it is important for the DFE to provide fair and plentiful learning accesses and opportunities for adults. Adults should have equal and enough opportunities for their learning. It should not necessary be free but it should be fair. If adults suffer from financial problems, they should get more supports for learning.

## **4 NIACE**

**Date:** 21 July 1994 13.00-14.30 **Place:** NIACE's office in London

**Interviewee:** Mr Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **4.1 The role of NIACE**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the NIACE's role in the DFE's ACE policy-making?



**Mr Tuckett:** The constitutional object of the Institute is the promotion of the study, and the general advancement, of ACE, and the Institute offers a means of consultation and cooperation for all the varied interests in this diverse field. It provides a service of information and advice to organisations and individuals. It designs and carries out research and development projects; organises conferences and seminars.

NIACE plays an important role in the DFE's policy-making in ACE. NIACE receives 15% of its total budget from the DFE. It has responsibilities to offer suggestions and consultation to the DFE. NIACE keeps close contacts with the Department of Employment, local government, statutory and voluntary sectors, professional organisations, practitioners, employers, and adult learners. The interaction between NIACE and the above organisations and people is through partnerships, formal and informal meetings, national and local conferences, publications, and so forth. NIACE reflects and filters different needs of ACE, from outsiders to the Government. It pays close attention to the DFE's policy-making. NIACE also communicates DFE's policies to the outsiders to help them to understand DFE's policies. It not only is a bridge between the DFE and outsiders but also is a filter and stimulator for ACE policy-making.

**The researcher:** Do you have any opportunity to get involved in the DFE's regular meetings for ACE policy-making?

**Mr Tuckett:** I do have many opportunities to participate in the DFE's regular meetings. NIACE utilises different ways and opportunities to play its role. For example, the NIACE has a committee which includes MPs in different departments. We provide them with useful information about debates, research findings, and our suggestions and ask them to always keep these in mind and reflect our demands. They do express our expectation on different occasions.

**The researcher:** Does the DFE often accept the NIACE's suggestions and reflect them on its ACE policy agenda?

**Mr Tuckett:** The NIACE provides many suggestions to the DFE. We give to the DFE people's demands and our opinions from diverse sources but whether they can be comprised in policy-making depends on the DFE's priority. Basically, the NIACE's suggestions do have obvious influences on the DFE's ACE policy-making. For example, Minister, Mr Tim Boswell, involves himself in this field very positively and keeps a close relationship with the NIACE. He also reflects many of our suggestions on policy-making, such as, concerning learning opportunities for old people, for the disadvantaged and so forth.

## **4.2 Policy-making of the DFE**

**The researcher:** Can you agree with this point that the DFE uses a pluralist process in its policy-making?

**Mr Tuckett:** The DFE does provide opportunities for outsiders to take part in its policy-making but it is still not good enough. Sometime policies are formulated without a pluralist process. I do hope the DFE can involve relevant organisations and people in its policy-making, such as high level civil servants in government's departments, the Association of local councils, pressure groups, different sectors, practitioners, employers and so on.

## **4.3 The influences of political parties**

**The researcher:** Can you say something about the influence of political parties on educational policy-making?

**Mr Tuckett:** Ideologies of political parties have significant influences on educational policy-making. The Conservative Party pays more attention to elitism. The National curriculum, high standards of evaluation, the key position of A Levels are all the indicators. The Labour Party stresses education for children under five. But, modernisation of this country is one of its main purposes.

**The researcher:** Does Thatcherism have negative effects on ACE?

**Mr Tuckett:** Thatcherism does have negative effects on ACE. It cuts public expenditures, and emphasises privatisation, marketism, and economism. Especially important, many sectors of ACE in London have been impacted.

#### **4.4 National ACE policies**

**The researcher:** Do you know whether vocational and qualifying courses have been in the mainstream of ACE provision?

**Mr Tuckett:** They have been the mainstream in recent years and will be maybe for a short term of future. This is mainly the result of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. But I think ACE provision cannot only be limited to this certification area. It should have a broader provision. The NIACE just sponsored a conference to discuss learning opportunities for general education and learning for its own sake. Learning for certification is not and cannot be the only purpose of ACE provision. I do hope in the near future, the 1992 Act can be revised and changed to pay more attention to general education.

**The researcher:** What has been the priority on the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Mr Tuckett:** Four kinds of priorities can be listed. First, the reflection of economic needs: ACE is applied as an instrument for resolving economic problems such as unemployment. Second, British competition in the global market: ACE is used to enhance the skilled workforce for economic competition. Third, getting benefits from Europe: Britain is a member of the European Union. ACE can be employed to get resources from the Union. Finally, marketism influences the DFE's policies. Policies are dominated by the needs of the market, and the resources available in the market.

**The researcher:** In your view, what should be the priority of national ACE policy?

**Mr Tuckett:** I have five my own priorities for ACE policy. First, there should be an entitlement for adult learning. Second, employers should have to continually train their staff,

or they should be taxed. Third, improving the participation of old people because of the increase of the aged population. Fourth, linking general education to vocational education closely. General education cannot be ignored and it should be connected closely with vocational education. Finally, LEAs should be the main provider of ACE. LEAs cannot lose their role and responsibility for providing ACE.

## **5 ALBSU**

**Date:** 22 July 1994 11.00-12.15 **Place:** ALBSU

**Interviewee:** Mr Alan Wells, Director of ALBSU

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **5.1 The role of ALBSU in the DFE's ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role of ALBSU in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Mr Wells:** ALBSU is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. It provides consultancy and advisory services, sponsors a range of national and local development projects, produces and publishes teaching and learning materials, co-ordinates and funds staff training, allocates grants to voluntary organisations and funds research. ALBSU is funded by the DFE but plays an independent role. It is the main institution for adult basic skills and education.

**The researcher:** Do you have any opportunity to get involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Mr Wells:** I do have opportunities to be involved in the DFE's ACE policy-making. In adult basic skills and education, ALBSU plays an important role. It does research, provides recommendations, and influences the DFE's policies in this area.

**The researcher:** During this process, who is ALBSU's partner?

**Mr Wells:** The partnership is very flexible. In government's departments, besides the DFE, we have a close relationship with the Department of Employment in workplace training, and have close cooperation with the Home Office in teaching English for immigrants. We establish relationships with varied colleges for provision purposes. We also cooperate with pressure groups struggling for more resources.

**The researcher:** According to the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, adult basic education is one of the funded courses. Have you got more resources?

**Mr Wells:** It is not easy to say. Our budget is about five million pounds. Adult basic education has been the government's priority for a long time. After the 1992 Act, the budget did not obviously increase.

## **5.2 The DFE's policy-making**

**The researcher:** Do you think the DFE uses a pluralist process in its policy-making?

**Mr Wells:** The DFE provides opportunities for discussion on policies and participation in policy-making. It used to be a pluralist process. As you mentioned, the new Education Secretary, Ms Gillian Shephard, stressed cooperation and working together with people who are involved in education, I hope the DFE will open its door to more outsiders.

## **5.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** As we know, British ACE has had a great change. Do you know what factors have affected this change?

**Mr Wells:** There are three main factors. The first one is the economic factor. Britain has suffered from the problems of low skills and low education participation. In order to compete in the global market, ACE has been empowered with more responsibilities in economic purposes. The NETTs, and vocation and qualification courses in the 1992 Act are all examples. The second one is the historical factor. Britain used to be an Empire. Since the

independence of its colonies, Britain has been looking for its location in Europe and in the world. This uncertainty may influence its policies. The third one is the political factor. The government is used to pay more attention to formal education. ACE is not the priority, especially with this Conservative Government, which has been in power for over fourteen years.

**The researcher:** How about Learner factors, such as adult participation motivation, and their diverse needs? Do they affect national ACE policy-making?

**Mr Wells:** I do not think Learner factors have much influence. Adults have very diverse needs. The DfE does not respond to their needs enough. There is much research upon adult participation. They found many reasons why adults continue their learning. But there is very much less research upon the outcome of adult learning. We cannot know clearly what the result of adult learning is.

**The researcher:** Because of the economic recession, more adults must learn to survive in the labour market by studying vocation and qualification courses. That makes the DfE emphasise mostly the economic targets of ACE.

**Mr Wells:** It is possible but we have to define the labour market. To know what the level of employment is.

## **5.4 Findings of the postal questionnaire survey**

**The researcher:** Do you know whether females still lack learning accesses, compared with males?

**Mr Wells:** Yes, women still lack learning accesses, compared with men. The reasons are sex discrimination, more stress on manpower in the workplace, and lack of childcare service.

**The researcher:** Do you know whether Londoners lack learning accesses, compared with those in English counties?

**Mr Wells:** Londoners used to have more social resources for continuing learning and have a higher participation rate. Recently, they have fewer accesses, especially in high unemployment boroughs.

### **5.5 Priority in ACE policy**

**The researcher:** Do you know what the priority is on the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Mr Wells:** Adult basic education is one of the priorities. Besides this, vocation and qualification courses are the priorities.

**The researcher:** In your view, what should be the priority of the DFE's ACE policy agenda?

**Mr Wells:** Adult basic education should be the priority. In my view, adult basic education has multiple functions. It can improve basic skills, increase education, and promote the quality of the workforce. It not only has a negative remedial function but has a positive function. It should be the basis of ACE and of the improvement of society.

**The researcher:** How about liberal adult education?

**Mr Wells:** Liberal adult education is a part of the ACE provision served by the LEAs. Adults have to pay more for liberal courses. It does not matter that adults choose liberal courses. But it is not so significant and urgent as adult basic education. Adult basic education should be available for adults who need it and it does make many contributions to adults themselves and to society.

### **6 FEFC for England (FEFCE) in London**

**Date:** 4 August 1994 11.00-12.30 **Place:** FEFC London Regional Office

**Interviewee:** Mr David Croome, Education Programmes Officer

**Interviewer:** The researcher

## **6.1 The role of FEFC and its relationship with relevant organisations**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role the FEFC plays in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Mr Croome:** The FEFC was set up in April 1993, funded by the DFE. It is mainly responsible for post compulsory education excluding formal school education and higher education. Its work was defined according to Schedule 2 of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. The field covers sectors colleges funded about by 90% budget, external institutions, further education of higher education institutions, and designated colleges. First, the FC funds courses listed in Schedule 2, which mostly lead to qualifications. Second, it has a developmental function. Third, it controls the quality of provision. The FEFC London office is one of the nine regional offices but it is responsible for about 1/6th of the institutions.

**The researcher:** In terms of national ACE policy, do you have any policies?

**Mr Croome:** Our main policies are to meet national official objectives such as by increasing participation, a more skilled workforce and meeting students' need to achieve the NETTs. Our strategies are to design and to develop resources and funding approaches. The Council is in charge of the courses relating to Schedule 2. We are not responsible for nonvocational and non-Schedule 2 courses. We have no specific provision for adults but they are one of the groups for whom we try to achieve the targets.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the Council and the DFE? Is there any command or direction from the DFE?



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**Mr Croome:** This Council is funded by the DFE and it is a quango. The DFE defines specifically what we should do. At present, the DFE has few directions for us. As to the FEFC, there is a representative from the DFE sitting in the Council. He/She will indicate the mission to the Council which the DFE would like to achieve. There are courses the DFE clearly defines that we should follow.

**The researcher:** Do you issue any direction to LEAs?

**Mr Croome:** Each year, we ask LEAs to give us their budget plans on courses relating to Schedule 2. We will take over the responsibility and fund these courses.

**The researcher:** Does the Council establish any partnership with professional organisations such as the NIACE or ALBSU?

**Mr Croome:** No. We obviously want to be aware of what the NIACE says. We have a funding mechanism through which we collect information from colleges. We have a committee to conduct this work. The NIACE is one of the organisations for consultation.

**The researcher:** How about the HEFC for England, do you have any relationship with it?

**Mr Croome:** Yes, we fund further education provided by higher education institutions, which would cover the work of the HEFC. But the funding is marginal, about 2-3%. We get involved in higher education through the advanced courses leading to higher education. If the HEFC changes its funding approaches, learners who suffer from financial problems will come back to us.

**The researcher:** As we know, there have been more adults studying in further education colleges. Is it possible for the Council to fund nonvocational courses in the future?

**Mr Croome:** I do not think so. Schedule 2 has clearly shown the funded courses. Non-Schedule 2 courses are left to LEAs. The funding we provide, which covers external institutions and designated colleges, only occupies a small ratio of our budget.

## **6.2 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** Do you know what factors have affected national ACE policy-making?

**Mr Croome:** Due to the poor performance of Britain in economic competition, compared with other developed countries, how to improve the quality of the workforce has become the main target of the government, for example, through the establishment of the NETTs. The DFE also realises the importance of the public's good nature. It stressed that nonvocational adult education should not be affected by the 1992 Act.

**The researcher:** How about learner factors such as, learner participation motivation, and their demands?

**Mr Croome:** Learner demands are one of the underlying factors that guide the DFE's ACE policy-making. Learners think continuing education is beneficial to make them sellable. Employers realise that workforce training is helpful for their products. They would invest more money in the workforce training. Since that is a signal in the workplace, adults therefore continue their learning for higher wages. This requirement will reflect on educational sectors. The Government also emphasises the economic function of workforce training. The resources are from taxes. Learner demands, wage creation, tax, and education therefore become a cycle.

## **6.3 Findings of the postal questionnaire survey**

**The researcher:** Do you know if Londoners have less learning access than those in English counties?

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**Mr Croome:** I do not think so. The participation rate in adult education is higher in London. Particularly due to historical reasons, London has a strong network of provision. On the whole, Londoners are richer. London is a big market, and has more learning resources. London has a comprehensive transport system. This supports people in gaining access. Londoners are used to valuing continuing education for increasing income. In general, Londoners are mostly highly educated and the majority involved in ACE have a comparatively higher educational background.

**The researcher:** Do women have few learning access, compared with men?

**Mr Croome:** Yes, that is always true. Women mostly study in nonvocational education. They are traditionally under-represented in qualification courses. Additionally, women tend to worry about their safety at night. That affects their participation in evening classes.

**The researcher:** Why do people aged 45-54 stress the importance of Learning access more than those over 65?

**Mr Croome:** The reason is clear. People aged 45-54 are more sensitive to the labour market and need learning accesses to enrich themselves. Unlike those over 65, this age group still has about a ten-year working life.

**The researcher:** Why did adult teachers emphasise the importance of the teaching process more than the other three occupation groups?

**Mr Croome:** It is easy to understand because the teaching process has a close relationship with adult educators. Adult educators tend to believe that continuing learning is a valuable thing.

### **6.4 National ACE policies**

**The researcher:** What has been the priority of the DFE's ACE policy?

**Mr Croome:** The DFE wants more people to go back to schools. The priority is to serve ACE provision that reflects the demands of learners because the government thinks that is beneficial.

**The researcher:** In your view, what should be the priority of the DFE's ACE policy?

**Mr Croome:** The priority at present is providing funding to meet the demands. More than that, to provide funding in a way which encourages providers of education to serve learners.

## **6.5 Liberal adult education**

**The researcher:** There are many people who prefer the nonvocational education which is served by LEAs. But, most LEAs have the problem of budget shortages.

**Mr Croome:** It is difficult to divide vocational and nonvocational education. For example, people study Japanese or GCSE courses, which could be deemed nonvocational courses but they also could be in Schedule 2. Most people like to have a goal for study. They hope to get something after learning. Some people study for social reasons such as for making friends. I do not think the government has to fund this kind of learning.

## **7 HEFC for England(HEFCE)**

**Date:** 18 August 1994 14.00-15.30 **Place:** HEFCE in Bristol

**Interviewee:** Ms Kate Nickols, Administrator for Continuing Education Policy

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **7.1 The role of HEFCE**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the role HEFCE plays in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Ms Nickols:** The Council's role is to advise the Secretary of State for Education on the funding needs of higher education institutions and to distribute available funds. The Council in performing this role will: encourage institutions to meet the demand from students cost-effectively, while promoting and assessing quality in teaching and research; encourage diversity in the provision of higher education, a widening of access and greater opportunities; develop active partnerships with institutions which fully recognise their autonomy; encourage institutions to build on their strengths and expand their local, regional, national, and international roles; encourage institutions to support these aims and ensure the effective and efficient use of their funds and assets.

As to ACE, from 1988 to 1992 the Universities Funding Council (UFC) was in charge of nonvocational provision and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) was responsible for vocational provision. This Council takes on these two responsibilities. Continuing education students included in the mainstream funding method for teaching will be treated in the same way as other part-time students, as long as they meet the minimum eligibility requirements for funding. In 1995-96 and beyond, continuing education provision which results in a recognised HE award, and also that continuing education which is accredited and can continue to receive an HE award (or is credit-bearing within a credit accumulation framework), will be eligible for funding.

**The researcher:** This Council combines the former UFC and the PCFC. Do you suffer from any problems when conducting your role?

**Ms Nickols:** Yes, it has been quite difficult for this Council to carry out its responsibilities after the combining the former UFC and the PCFC. The working framework of this Council is still developing. It is hard to make two different provisions into a common system.

## **7.2 The relationships of the HEFCE with other relevant organisations**

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between this Council and the DFE? Can the Council influence DFE's policies in higher education?

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**Ms Nickols:** This Council is a semi-governmental body. It is mainly funded by the DFE. The DFE has guidelines and directions showing what it wants us to do. Most of the members of the Council are named by the DFE. Therefore, the DFE can put its policies into the Council. The Council can make its own policies mostly in relation to funding. This Council can affect DFE's higher education policies. We provide information about the practice of higher education and make suggestions to the DFE. The chairman and senior executives have opportunities to join in the DFE's policy-making. There is regular dialogue going on between two sides via meetings.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the HEFCE and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)?

**Ms Nickols:** We have a close relationship. This Council usually sends documents associated with what we are going to do to the HEFCW. The HEFCW will consider whether the plans are suitable for it. Chairpersons and executives in both Councils have meetings for discussion. The higher education funding system in Wales is similar to ours. This Council also wants to play a leading role in the work. It is not necessary for the HEFCW to follow our steps.

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between the Council and the FEFC for England?

**Ms Nickols:** We do not have any special relationship with the FEFCE. The FEFCE has its own funding scheme. We do cover the courses relating to higher education in further education colleges. For example, the Council is also responsible for funding prescribed courses of higher education taught in 77 further education colleges.

**The researcher:** Does this Council establish any partnership with professional organisations when conducting its duties?

**Ms Nickols:** We do not establish any special partnership with professional organisations. There are many potential professional organisations with which we will discuss certain topics. The main lobby is engineers. They are concerned about updating engineering skills and highlighting this factor in higher education.

### **7.3 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** In your view, what factors have affected national ACE policy-making?

**Ms Nickols:** We find that vocational continuing education in higher education has gradually become the mainstream. There have been wider ranges of continuing education leading to qualifications and practical targets. I think the economic reason is an influential factor.

**The researcher:** How about the ideologies of political parties? Do they influence national ACE policy-making?

**Ms Nickols:** They might have some influences. In terms of higher education, no matter which political party has been in power, higher education has grown since the growth results in many benefits. In the past, due to the elitism, higher education was only for a small number of people.

**The researcher:** Do you know whether these great changes in ACE can meet the demands of adult learners?

**Ms Nickols:** Adult demands are very diverse. There is evidence showing that more adults are interested in qualifications at Extra-Mural Studies Centres. Most adults may prefer credits or qualifications. This trend will affect nonvocational ACE and result in its losing funds.

### **7.4 The priority of national ACE policy**

**The researcher:** In your view, what has been the priority of the DFE's ACE policy?

**Ms Nickols:** I think the vocational side of the ACE has been the priority of the DFE policy. NETTs and economic competition are all the signals. But, on the other hand, the DFE sticks to lifelong learning which is not merely limited to vocational provision.

**The researcher:** Do you know what the focus of the Council is on ACE?

**Ms Nickols:** This Council covers vocational and nonvocational continuing education in higher education including full-time and part-time provision. We fund courses comprising these two sides. Especially important, part-time funded courses are going to grow. Comparatively, vocational continuing education leading to qualifications and credits in higher education is the mainstream. Nonvocational continuing education in higher education may have fewer resources.

## **8 Academic 1**

**Date:** 07 August 1995 10.00-11.00 **Place:** King's College Cornwall House Room 2/22

**Interviewee:** Professor Stephen J. Ball

**Interviewer:** The Researcher

### **8.1 Policy-making in the DFE**

**The researcher:** In general, what is your opinion about ACE policy-making in the DFE?

**Professor Ball:** Traditionally, ACE has been a minor concern, compared with other education. Sometime it is described as the 'Cinderella'. The major changes in ACE policy agenda have been integrated into employment training and there has been funding away from adult leisure education. Courses provided are affected by the funding formula. The output of education has been emphasised and become a significant indicator. We can find many cases in school education and higher education. Competition has been a main responsibility of different schools, especially for funding.



### **Political ideologies**

**The researcher:** In your view, is Major's government still influenced by Thatcherism or New Right ideology?

**Professor Ball:** Yes, that is an important factor. Marketism is one of the concerns of neo-liberalism and Thatcherism, which the Conservative Party bears in mind. The situation of output orientation and involvement of industries through funding organisations does not only happen in Britain. It has become an impact across the world. This idea is borrowed from management science. They use performance indicators and these indicators can be applied in different settings. This trend can be found in different countries, not only neo-liberal Britain. A specific example is New Zealand. They use performance indicators broadly. Productivity is a vital indicator of education. In Britain, the same idea has become a technique and can happen in different areas, like health service, and it is very sophisticated. It is related to the autonomy of organisations which have the power to make their own decision. It can be very attractive to organisation leaders because they can exercise freedom and get away from bureaucratic control. Performance goals are the factors which influence the whole situation. But the government set up the goals from outside instead of inside the organisations. So there is no clear way. The Conservative tries to have an uniformity. The GNVQ is now an assessment system in ACE. The government wants to change ACE from diversity to uniformity. However, it is difficult to use this system on different institutions. I am not surprised that adult education centres have to focus their courses on the GNVQ to find funding.

**The researcher:** In your view, is political ideology an important factor affecting educational policy-making, not only ACE?

**Professor Ball:** One of them. Sometime it is too tidy to reduce the influences to political ideology. It is normally important in this country to create an agenda for policy-making. Inside the policy-making there are different influential groups and there are differences between general policy-making and specific policy-making. There is a contradiction here.

For example, the market is diversity. But they want to put uniformity and diversity together. In school education, the government stresses techniques in one way, but traditional values like academic achievement in another way. There is no sole processing strategy for policy-making because the government uses different approaches to deal with different problems at different times. In the 1988 ERA, the government put most emphasis on industrial needs, particularly in maths, technology, and science. But after 1991, those emphasis shifted to more traditionalism with emphases on British heritage, on the British literature and on the British role in the world and much more concern for political uniformity.

**The researcher:** Can we say this is the result of negotiation while the Conservatives, for example between the right wing and left wing, the Cabinet and backbenchers?

**Professor Ball:** Yes, to some extent. The government has a responsibility to maintain stability of state. It is interesting to study policy-making from a global or international perspective. There is a policy-borrowing from different governments and countries. We can find different governments which have different ideologies but the same resolution. British ideologies like marketism, choice, and competition have been borrowed from other countries. British City Technology Colleges modeled American mechanic schools.

**The researcher:** Many people argue that since the 1988 ERA, British educational policy-making has become more centralised. What is your opinion?

**Professor Ball:** That is true. But the danger is to say that there is a single policy orientation. There is a move from the one to the other but the move does not mean there is now no difference; there is now no tension toward coherence.

### **The style of policy-making**

**The researcher:** As you mentioned in some of your work, there have been more advisory bodies and employers involved in the government's educational policy-making. Can we say the DFE uses a pluralist style of policy-making?

**Professor Ball:** To an extent. They have shifted. Until the early 1980s, LEAs and teacher organisations were involved in educational policy-making although you can argue how influential they were. Clearly they are not now represented in educational policy-making and have been replaced by other influences and parties. Employers have become much more significant. The process of Policy-making is influenced by many bodies, like the FEU. The prior director of the FEU was an adult educator but has been replaced by an industrialist. Recently, the FEU has been merged with further education staff colleges as the Further Education Development Agency so the FEU has disappeared. About four or six months ago, the FEU was still concerned with the relationship with employers. But a month ago, it was merged. These two things cannot work together. The culture of the DFE may be one factor which explains the merge of the DFE and Department of Employment. In the mid 1900, Lord Young, when he was the Secretary for Employment, attempted to merge his department with the DES but failed. The DES maintained its independence. The DFE has always regarded as with a very traditional view of education and has a very weak relationship with employment. There are many influences in educational policy-making but they are not always listened to. For example, although employers have had an important influence, most of them were very unhappy when the 1988 ERA put emphasis on maths, technology and science. They did not like the direction of the curriculum.

**The researcher:** What is the factor preventing policy-makers from listening to employers' opinions? Ideology or others?

**Professor Ball:** Partly because of ideologies and partly because of other influential groups. Around 1991, the Centre of Policy Study was very influential, particularly when John Major was a new Prime Minister, its influential voice could easily reach his ears.

## **8.2 Factors affecting educational policy-making**

**The researcher:** There have been some influential sources in educational policy-making, can you list these influential factors?

**Professor Ball:** In general, the economy has been focused on. It is always a foreground and background factor. There are concerns about social order, and social security. There are political concerns, like national identity, family values and culture particularly in the national curriculum. There are also managerial and technical concerns, or say, a management system of education, which is related to how to resolve the practical problems of education.

**The researcher:** Do you think that adult Learner demands, or say, grassroots demands, influence ACE policy-making?

**Professor Ball:** The influence is very weak. There are two reasons here. First, ACE sectors are not seen as very important institutions. Second, adult Learner demands are very diverse. Differences are found in different areas and in different departments. There is no coherent voice of adults' demands.

**The researcher:** Do you think liberal ACE has a bright future?

**Professor Ball:** No, even the Labour Party has put more attention on vocational education. The middle class is still the majority in ACE rather than the working class, so the Labour Party has less interest.

## **9 DFE 2**

**Date:** 08 August 1995 15.30-17.00 **Place:** Department for Education and Employment, Further Education Branch, Choice and Performance Division

**Interviewee:** Mr Stephen Kershaw, Head of Choice and Performance Division, Further Education Branch

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **9.1 The current situation of ACE in the DFE**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce the current situation of the DFE after merging with the Department of Employment?

**Mr Kershaw:** The DFE is responsible for education and training. Since the Government has focused education on economic competitiveness, employers have become more important. There has been a closer relationship with employers in education and training. This is the main reason why these two Departments have been merged. The Government stresses lifetime learning. It wants more people continuing their learning through qualifications and vocational courses to upgrade their skills. Qualifications and vocational courses have been the mainstream of ACE. The Government is responsive to the workplace and to the demands of employers. It puts more responsibilities on individuals and colleges through the setting up of standards and assessments. It is too early to say exactly what effect the merger-still only just over a month old! - will have on this. I strongly suspect that the focus will continue to be on driving up participation and achievement in education and training by adult learners, in line with the National Targets, to create a 'learning society', where learning throughout life is the norm. That will mean taking steps to encourage greater commitment from individuals and employers as well as continuing to ensure that we get the publicly provided supply side- FE colleges, HE institutions, TECs, the student support system, etc-on the right track.

**The researcher:** Therefore, employers have increased their influence on the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Mr Kershaw:** Yes. The Government keeps in close contact with employers and is responsive to their demands. The national targets and GNVQs actually have received very many contributions of employers. Employers also invest much money in workforce training. The Government encourages employer investment in workforce training via certain forms of tax reliefs and the establishment of City Technique Colleges. The main organisations like the FEFCs have members from industries and businesses.

## **9.2 Factors affecting ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** What is the major factor affecting ACE policy-making?

**Mr Kershaw:** That factor is very clear. The Government's target is to improve economic competitiveness. Therefore, qualifications and vocational courses are the major provision and there has been more involvement of employers. National targets have been the indicators and criteria for education and training. They are focused on not only by the central Government and employers but also by local ACE colleges. Local ACE colleges know these targets very clearly.

**The researcher:** In this situation, I think qualifications and vocational courses are the priorities of the DFE's ACE policy agenda.

**Mr Kershaw:** That is very clear. For economic reasons, the Government emphasises qualifications and vocational courses and encourages employers to provide training and more adults to participate in learning. This then forms the Government's ACE policy framework.

### **9.3 ACE Policy-making in the DFE**

#### **The process**

**The researcher:** What is the process of policy-making in this Department? Does ACE policy-making have any 'rational stages'?

**Mr Kershaw:** It is very difficult to generalise. I think you need to distinguish between major policies requiring legislation and minor policy initiatives that do not. Where legislation is required there is a clear timetable to follow, starting (typically) with the announcement of the policy in a consultative 'White Paper' and culminating in the publication of the legislation, which is then thoroughly debated and amended in Parliament. There may be variations in this process, for instance, by use of the publication of a so-called 'Green Paper' before (or instead of) the White Paper, where the Government wishes to set out a broader range of options for public debates.

As to more minor policy initiatives, they are generally instigated by officials - sometime of quite junior rank-in consultation with non-Government experts, very often from publicly

funded organisations which are not part of Government itself (called 'non-departmental public bodies').

**The starting point**

**The researcher:** Where does the original policy come from? Can you list some possible sources?

**Mr Kershaw:** There are certain sources of policy. First, ministers have their own ideas or refer to the Government's policy as a whole. They may also be responsible to other influences. Second, civil servants may draw up their draft policy and then develop it into formal policy. Third, demands of pressure groups may become a part of policy via lobbying. Fourth, demands of employers may reflect on policy-making through different paths.

**The researcher:** How about academics or think tanks like the Centre of Policy study?

**Mr Kershaw:** Yes, think tanks may influence policy-making. As to the Centre of Policy Study, I included it in the pressure groups. Academics have less influence on policy-making, especially after 1990.

**The researcher:** Do all civil servants have the power to make policy or only senior civil servants?

**Mr Kershaw:** The British Government is a democratic government. In the bureaucratic administration, not only senior civil servants have the power to make policy but junior civil servants can exercise their influences. Their opinions may be accepted by ministers and involved in the formal policy. It is of course highly unlikely that officials would put a proposal to Ministers which does not accord with the general thrust of Government's education policy.

**The researcher:** Among these possible sources of policy, which is the most influential one?

**Mr Kershaw:** Demands of employers and civil servants. Do not forget civil servants. They are working in this Department and they may make direct contributions to policy-making.

**The participation**

**The researcher:** In the process of policy-making, does the Department give opportunities to outsiders to take part?

**Mr Kershaw:** Not really. It is not welcomed. Policy-makers in this Department do not want too many different voices included in this process. Certain professional groups and employers have always been involved in the process. The public also has opportunities to discuss the White Papers and other policy proposals.

**The researcher:** But as far as I know, this is a very strong demand.

**Mr Kershaw:** I am not surprised. People can exert their influence in different ways, like via pressure groups, debates by articles. It is impossible for the Government to give everyone the chance to participate in policy-making.

**The researcher:** How about interaction among different Departments? Is it possible that there is influence from other government departments?

**Mr Kershaw:** Cabinet ministers do have regular meetings with other colleagues in government departments twice a week. It is not possible for other Departments to affect this Department's policy-making. Each Department has its own affairs and is so busy that it has no spare time to intervene in other Departments' policy-making. And ministers in this Department always stick to their policy and they give few opportunities to other colleagues to get involved in their policy-making.

**The researcher:** How about the Prime Minister?



**Mr Kershaw:** It is possible. Prime Minister is responsible for all of the policies of different departments. As part of the whole Government's policy, it is possible for him to look at educational policy. For example, to improve British economic competitiveness is a major policy of this Government. The Prime Minister may pay attention to how many contributions education and training have made and give further directions. However, the office of the Prime Minister is very busy, sometime with tiny affairs. They do not have much time to concern themselves about the Departments' policy-making.

**The researcher:** Is there any regular meeting in which civil servants in this Department can develop policy?

**Mr Kershaw:** No. There are regular meetings but they are discussions of general affairs, not for policy-making. The participation in policy-making of civil servants is through 'Teams'. Since a civil servant is not necessarily familiar with everything, there are different teams responsible for specific areas of work. Therefore, policy-making may begin with the responsible teams. Civil servants usually participate in policy-making as a group.

### **Learning rights**

**The researcher:** There have been arguments, in terms of the social welfare model, saying that the Government has to give more resources to adults who study in nonvocational courses.

**Mr Kershaw:** The Government is concerned about every kind of lifetime learning. Local Educational Authorities are responsible for nonvocational provision.

**The researcher:** But, as far as I know, most traditional ACE institutions sponsored by LEAs have had problems with funding and have declined. Some of them have disappeared.

**Mr Kershaw:** The Government needs to set up its priorities of policy-making. It has its limited sources, like funding. As to ACE, the priority is very clear. Qualification and

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vocational courses have been the main focus. In another respect, it is difficult to draw the line between vocational and nonvocational courses. They can be interchangeable. In practice, there have been more adults learning in further education colleges. I think colleges will focus more of their concern on adults rather than only on the 16-19 age group.

**The researcher:** Some people argue that learning is a right. The Government has to protect social justice. As far as I know, since the change in the funding focus, adult learners have to pay more of the tuition fees for themselves. For the unemployed, their opportunity to continue learning has been influenced.

**Mr Kershaw:** That is true. However, that is also the reason why the Government stresses vocational provision. The Government wants to help adults to enrich their skills and get a job. For the unemployed, the Government has a special policy for them. They do not have to pay tuition fees.

#### **The future**

**The researcher:** In these changing times, do you have a forecast for ACE? What is the next step that the Government may adopt?

**Mr Kershaw:** The Government will still focus on the increase in participation in higher and further education and in lifetime learning via qualification and vocational provision. The Government will encourage more individuals and employers to take part in lifetime learning. In the near future, the new merged Department will issue its ideas on lifetime learning.

### **10 Academic 2**

**Date:** 10 August 1595 13.45-14.45 **Place:** Department of Educational Studies, University of Surrey

**Interviewee:** Professor Peter Jarvis

**Interviewer:** The researcher

## **10.1 The current situation of ACE**

**The researcher:** The Government has focused on qualifying and vocational ACE provision. What is your opinion about that?

**Professor Jarvis:** Since M Thatcher had been in her office, British education has been more closer to industry. We can see that in the past twenty years, continuing education has continually grown. Britain has had its pressures since the end of the Empire. Education has become an instrument to regain its position. I think the policy is misguided for a number of reasons. Britain's industries are without education and education follows industrialisation. For instance, there have arisen higher technologies and automation. I do not know whether school education, higher education or adult education has to respond to that. I think the policy is wrong in saying that it should be always provided for adults. In another way, it is wrong. Simply, education should be about the whole person. We do not teach technology. We teach people technology. I think that has been forgot sometime. We can refer to the book called 'Industrialism and industrial men', to the section of page 47, which highlights education and industrialisation. It talks about which subjects should be in the curriculum and which subjects should be for the leisure time. I think that the philosophy of this Government at this moment is such that we have to concentrate only upon those subjects perceived as important. It can be said that we just need money to create subjects.

## **10.2 Social model of ACE provision**

**The researcher:** We can say the Government prefers to apply the market model to provide ACE. As you mentioned in your book, 'The state and adult education', there are other models, like the social welfare model and radical model. These models based on different ideas, do you think the Government has to draw more attention to the social welfare model?

**Professor Jarvis:** I presented a paper in a conference, which was concerned with higher education. High-grade techniques can bypass education. Industry and company can provide training with education in the middle. Learning is a much more important concept, as well as how people learn. Now Britain stresses qualifications. As long as people can achieve the

criteria, we do not care how they do it. It does not matter how people learn them. If they can do it, we will certify them. This movement has recognised that we do not need traditional education in class. For people can learn on the job; they can teach themselves; they can certify themselves.

**The researcher:** But, at this juncture, the power of the market model is very strong.

**Professor Jarvis:** Yes, but what controls the market may not be the government. Those controllers may be the organisers and people who can sell the courses cheaper. As I argued in my book, real education is more about being. Market work is about having. 'Market' is a very complex concept. It is not just about money or the money flowing through it. In policy terms, we cannot say that is market-decided. We have to refer to history. Where we are at this stage. There is a book called 'The End of History', written by a American scholar. He said we do not know where we are going. He said we do not have any concept of history. Therefore it is hard to make policy about the future. So all we can do is say that subjects are for the market or we cannot get funding. It is a type of recognition. As to the next area, obviously, if Britain can compete in the international market then we need Europe. So the next area of support is Europe. Then we have another problem, how to get into Europe without appearing to say we lost our Empire. So I think you got a number of policy questions around that.

### **10.3 Traditional ACE**

**The researcher:** In the current situation and the near future, we must say that our view of the future of traditional adult education is pessimistic. In your view, what kind of role does ACE have to play in this situation?

**Professor Jarvis:** I see there is a great market for adult education. Those courses can be run cheaper without qualifications. So nonformal adult education is growing. Education for the elderly is the fastest growing area in Britain. The Universities of the Third Age- the one in Guildford, for instance, is over a thousands strong. In Working, it is eight hundred. It costs

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ten pounds a year to join. All courses are free. You do not get paid to teach. They learn at home and no exams. So there is a great market growing up for courses that do not have to be financially available or funded. All these people want to study but they do not want degrees. I have many examples. We are living longer. If we do not want qualifications which the Government has funded, non-certified courses are continually growing which are provided by organisers who can run cheaply. So in a sense, the market model is going to allow other institutions to come in to offer courses cheaply. And then eventually, they will give them certificates too.

**The researcher:** I visited some adult education institutions and they are very much concerned about their future. They have to survive because most of them have in a shortage of funding.

**Professor Jarvis:** Of course and then they still have to keep up the bureaucratic structure. Though you break the structure-organisations like the Universities of the Third Age, do not have a building. They can meet in people's houses. They do not have an office. Their cost is much cheaper. In contrast, institutions of LEAs, they have to pay much for carting, teachers' salaries and so on.

**The researcher:** So the Universities of the Third Age are going to be the mainstream of traditional adult education?

**Professor Jarvis:** They do grow massively. They could take the place of liberal adult education, especially; that is nearly world wide.

**The researcher:** How about adults who are not old?

**Professor Jarvis:** There are Women Institutes starting to provide more courses for women but they are not for degrees. You have to get universities which can undercut traditional courses because these courses are cheaper. So the market is going to produce innovation,

which is a good sign. We see that traditional adult education is being broken. The market model is destroying it. Of course, people like me in the traditional settings do not like what they are seeing.

**The researcher:** Do you think it is possible that further education college will become a new style of adult education institutions in the near future?

**Professor Jarvis:** They are institutions providing for vocation, qualifications and basic education. They will continue to grow because of the market. As they responded to the market of the 16-years-olds for higher education, professional continuing education and adult basic education, further education colleges will see a great market for traditional adult education.

**The researcher:** So, in your opinion, adult education has a bright future?

**Professor Jarvis:** It is adult learning which is opposed to adult education. Adult education in the traditional sense has not got a bright future. In a society with high technology, there are a lot of opportunities for learning. People are continuing to learn. In my view, adult learning and adult education are quite different. Adult education has died or is dying. I use the term, education of adults or for adults rather than adult education. And, I prefer the term, lifelong learning, or sometimes lifewide learning. I have been using 'lifelong learning' since 1981. Learning is about the whole life process and learning is a whole drive. Learning is much broader than education. Learning is a process in which I become me; you become you; anybody becomes any else. Learning is a whole life, from birth to death. Education is a subsection of that.

## **10.4 Policy-making in the DFE**

**The researcher:** Let's go back to policy-making in the previous DFE. You mentioned in your book that the state model has become very strong in this country. As we know, since the

1970s, the central government has increased its power greatly and LEAs have decreased theirs.

**Professor Jarvis:** Yes, very much. Adult education has a lovely concept of democracy. The government does not really know what it means. We have never had democracy in this country and the state can never give you more than a situation which appears to be offering you a lot. Or, it will give you something but not everything. Now the authorised government is funding a system that frames a particular population's criticism such as vocational courses. In European Union, there is some exchanging of funding. So we can say that education is being used to create the European consciousness. Education is a thing of moral goods. I am not sure, but I wish it could, if it can make a contribution to the values of morals.

**The researcher:** I met with some pressure groups, like the NIACE and ALBSU, their directors do have opportunities to get involved in the process of the DFE's ACE policy-making. But the door still does not seem to be open enough.

**Professor Jarvis:** Government policy in Britain is very much such that it would listen to people who want to be listened to. In some working groups, the door is closed. Few academics are included. I don't think Britain is a very academic country. It doesn't apply academics. And that is increasing.

### **10.5 Factors affecting ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** When we trace back the history of ACE, we find ACE has changed very much. Do you know what factors have effected these changes?

**Professor Jarvis:** Yes, it has changed very much. As you mentioned, from the 1919 Report so far, the government has not done much for adult education. In peace time, it is not a time for quality. It is a time for market.

**The researcher:** There should be factors affecting these changes in ACE policy-making such as political, economic, and social factors.

**Professor Jarvis:** The global market is tremendously important. Because you cannot undercut our workforce unless we can automate. So then we can compete with you because machine is against machine. It is cheaper to put work in the Pacific Rim than it to put it here. So, unless we automate, we must have a workforce. Even though we have automated, we have unemployment. If we don't automate, we lose the market to countries whose labour force is cheaper. So we always have a higher unemployment rate, which cuts into our welfare state. There is no single statement of policy. The policy is very complex and it is much more complex than people recognise.

**The researcher:** According to my questionnaire survey, social and educational factors have less influence on ACE policy-making. The Economic factor is the strongest one and in some sense the Learner factors.

**Professor Jarvis:** Yes, social and educational factors have very much less influence. In terms of the Learner factor, it doesn't cost the government much money to provide.

**The researcher:** How about political factors such as Thatcherism and New Right ideologies?

**Professor Jarvis:** Yes, there are political factors, but let's go back to the global market. They are only the consequences. Thatcherism is the consequence of the global market. It is very hard to say which is the chicken and which is the egg. I don't think the policy comes first. Policy is not initiated in Westminster. It may be finalised there. They gather all the people together and listen to people who are influential. People who can influence money will influence finance and the market. So what happened is that more employers have got into this process and they will be influenced by the labour market. Yes, the economic factor is the strongest one. Britain cannot be independent of the global market.



**The researcher:** There are some arguments which claim the Conservative and Labour Parties do not influence ACE policy-making differently.

**Professor Jarvis:** There will be a very great difference; there will be little difference and there will be a gloss. Because the power structure doesn't change. There are just a few people occupying one part of it. Because the power structure really is what happens in industry and companies. The middle class is the majority of adult learners but they are not powerful class. The powerful people come at industry. In terms of policy-making in Westminster, there are influences from the front door but there are real pressures from the back door. If you can get into Westminster and affect pressure groups and quangos, then you will have influences.

### **10.6 Personal ACE policy agenda**

**The researcher:** What is your personal Policy agenda in ACE?

**Professor Jarvis:** As an academic, my policy agenda is to make this department be seen as good, both by providers and researchers. It needs to be focused on in this university and to get resources. My work is to convince this institution that education for adults is worth pursuing. So my personal policy is to help education survive.

## **11 Academic 3**

**Date:** 17 August 1995 09.30-10.30 **Place:** Institute of Education

**Interviewee:** Professor Chris Duke, Department of Continuing Education, University of Warwick and Vice Chair of the Universities Association of Continuing Education (UACE)

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **11.1 Factors affecting national ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** British ACE has had a great change, especially since the 1970s. In your view, what factors have affected British ACE?

**Professor Duke:** the beginning of your historical review, if I remember correctly, the 1919 Report has never been really implemented. The same situation is occurred the Second World War. There was again a social reconstruction and creation of a social welfare state. There was a sense that the LEAs should provide adult education in their local regions. Some LEAs got fruitful funding but some had very little. The 1944 Education Act did show the government's commitment in education which the 1919 Report didn't. Concerning national policy-making in ACE, they are mainly retraining, updated training, qualifications and vocational skills such as the GNVQs and NETTS. There are criticisms of the NETTs and the GNVQs. Some people criticise them, complaining that they are not systems measuring learning but are like systems for head-counting, recording, like-collecting stamps-and not necessarily leading to better educational performance. ACE policy has been strongly economically-determined. Therefore there is an argument over whether this is education or just training. This policy is illusive and indirect. One of the reasons is that the Conservative Government is very resistant and reluctant to increase taxation and appearances without augmenting the power of the state. So it is believed that employers should do these things and employers are encouraged to resolve them. Therefore, the policy world has become an empty world. It is not given direct powers of delivery.

**The researcher:** Because of the long-term leadership of the Conservative Party, do you think its ideologies have affected ACE policy-making, for instance Thatcherism and New Right debate?

**Professor Duke:** You cannot do a modern policy study of education or anything else, without looking at the political ideological context-Sixteen years of this Government which has taken a quite strong ideological position as on social welfare policies.

**The researcher:** There are arguments which saying that there is no difference in ACE policy between the Labour and Conservative Parties' ACE policy. Do you agree with that?

**Professor Duke:** First, I think it must remain a speculation. We don't know what the Labour Party's policy is until it actually make it. Second, the Labour Party is undergoing a massive transformation at present. Especially after Tony Blair replaced John Smith as the leader, there has been a debate inside the Party. It is particularly difficult to say if Mr Blair can win the support of the middle class. Speaking as a socialist or Labour Party supporter, I would be more optimistic that the policy value is still there. The Conservative Party, Thatcherism or the New Right debate, has very much moved into the free market from the perspective of economic. The Labour Party has been also moved into the middle ground. What Mr Blair has done is try to occupy the areas in which the Conservatives are weak and that traditionally belong to the Conservative Party. In experience, in policy, the change will be rather marginal. It is difficult to know how ACE will face it.

## **11.2 Liberal ACE**

**The researcher:** As Schedule 2 listed, while vocational and qualifying ACE has been the mainstream, how has the government satisfied the demands of adults who pursue learning for its own sake or prefer a liberal adult education?

**Professor Duke:** You can get this point from senior civil servants, that it is great that people want to have a richer culture and continue learning as a leisure activity via liberal adult education. But, they have to pay by themselves, just like they have to pay to go to cinemas, theatres, football matches or ballets. This is a private recreation area. why should the state take money from hard working citizens to give to the class who wishes to fund its recreational activities? This is the formal position and it is quite clear.

**The researcher:** Some people apply the social welfare model or radical model to ask government to put more money into nonvocational ACE provision. What is your comment?

**Professor Duke:** As I mentioned earlier, if it is purely a private recreational area, why should my money be taken from my pocket by the government to support this kind of learning? That is a big debate. For example, if people want to go to an opera that costs a lot of money,

why should I pay for them? There are low income people who need medical care and housing. I would like my money to go into this kind of social welfare, like health services rather than to support personal recreational learning. That is a very powerful argument. Education is still an important approach for people who wish to continue to advance their career, no matter whether through formal school education or community education paths. I think what the government can do fairly is to fund retraining courses and second chance education. To improve knowledge of skills to compete with countries like the tigers in Asia, Taiwan and Singapore. The government has made that quite clear. When Britain is rather poor and has got an aging population and aging infrastructure, the above argument is quite strong.

### **11.3 Policy-making in the DFE**

**The researcher:** Do you think policy-making in the DFE follows a democratic process that it opens to pressure groups, academics or other outsiders?

**Professor Duke:** the political perspective, if the government wants to survive, it has to realise what is popular. Most policies are related to these things. What is possible? What is supportable? So you have to listen, if you want to stay in power. You have to look, if you are consulting. Let policy-making be open and be shared. People who want to get into power can lobby through the open process. For example, in ACE, the Director of NIACE, Alen Tuckett has a significant influence.

**The researcher:** Comparatively speaking, academics have less influence in this process.

**Professor Duke:** Academics have at least three ways to influence the government. One is direct lobbying and persuading, which is the way Alan Tuckett, or say, the NIACE uses. They get into the government, form a close relationship with senior civil servants and discuss the White\Green Papers to lobby or gain influence. The second way is to catch on to the significant issues and address your comments through the mass media. The third way in ACE is to get into the organisations with employers and let them speak for you.

## **11.4 Demanded ACE policy agenda**

**The researcher:** I would like to know your personal ACE policy agenda.

**Professor Duke:** My personal commitment is always to the educational opportunity for the poor, education for development, education for social and cultural development of a place with minorities not just for individuals to be able to become more participative. So I take a very old passion in community areas and a socialist view of adult education. Further, lifetime learning should be continually focused on. For people who have problems to achieve, for which the government has to provide resources, which is what the NIACE working for.

## **12 FEFC for England**

**Date** 24 August 1995 14.00-1530 **Place:** FEFC, Coventry

**Interviewee:** Ms Emily Thrane, Administrative coordinator

**Interviewer:** The researcher

### **12.1 The priority of FEFC's work**

**The researcher:** Would you please introduce this Council's work.

**Ms Thrane:** The FEFC for England became a new funding council from 1992, which has taken over the power of funding for further education colleges from the LEAs. Its members, about fifteen, are appointed, not elected, by the Education Secretary. Members are principals of universities, colleges and representatives of business. In total, this Council's priorities are as follows:

- 1 To secure public money for colleges; to see how the budget is spent.
- 2 To fund courses, run by colleges and the LEAs which lead to qualifications and higher education.
- 3 To develop further education and improve its quality through the design of a funding methodology to encourage colleges.
- 4 To meet the needs of basic education for the disabled with learning difficulties.
- 5 To begin to develop its own planning mechanism.

6 To establish a system for inspecting further education in colleges.

Schedule 2 is the guideline of this Council's funding. Therefore courses leading to vocational qualifications, to higher education and basic education for adults with learning difficulty are funded. Liberal adult education is not our responsibility but we fund four adult education colleges in London and the WEA whose provision covers liberal adult education. To fund liberal education is the duty of the LEAs. Liberal adult education has not been the priority of the DFE.

## **12.2 The relationship with the DFE in ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** This Council is a semi-governmental organisation. As far as you know, what role does this Council play in the DFE's ACE policy-making?

**Ms Thrane:** This Council does have a close relationship with the DFE. The DFE passes its directions on us, which tell us what we have to do. There are representatives of the DFE and of the former Department of Employment who attend this Council's meetings. They can make contributions. We offer advice to the government each year. We are asked by the Secretary of State to say what the financial problems in colleges are. Therefore we have an opportunity to talk about money every year. We put the inspection report into the annual report on quality and the inspection work. We always set up committees to look at some significant aspects of policy, such as students with learning difficulties, and funding methodology. I am working in a participation committee that tries to encourage more people to come into continuing education. The chairman and chief executives quite regularly meet with ministers. The Council has an annual strategy meeting which always has ministers or senior civil servants joining in. We have an annual conference that always has a speaker from the DFE. We keep a close relationship with the DFE. We accept the DFE's directions and we give it our advice.

**The researcher:** Is it possible for this Council to make its own national ACE policy?

**Ms Thrane:** It depends on what you mean by policy. We have a funding methodology that is really complex. It is a policy made by ourselves. The development of the funding methodology was headed by a senior executive. He then gathered a group of people from the Council and the sectors which would be influenced by the methodology. We published a paper called 'Funding learning' to collect responses from people for further development. We are very concerned about people's interests and provide a democratic process to consult with people and collect their responses. In addition, we can provide advice to the DFE to influence its policy or present our policy. Our policies are in the line with the legislation and what the government wants. I suppose we have the freedom to make a policy which the DFE does not want but we don't choose to do that.

### **12.3 The relationship with pressure groups**

**The researcher:** What is the relationship between this Council and the pressure groups such as the NIACE?

**Ms Thrane:** The NIACE is not in this Council but we have colleagues and committees in charge of adult education. NIACE's executives are well known here. The NIACE issues many publications and provides fruitful information. We have a link with the NIACE and cooperate on some work. Sometime we take account of their recommendations but not always. They also respond to our consultations. The relationship is diverse. Broadly speaking, the Council gets along with the NIACE very well.

### **12.4 Factors affecting ACE policy-making**

**The researcher:** You mentioned earlier, Britain's economic competitiveness is an important target. We can also find that Britain's ACE has undergone great changes. Do you know what factors have affected Britain's ACE policy-making?

**Ms Thrane:** One of the principles is competitiveness, which is described in two White Papers. These two White Papers stress how to help business to win and the working relationship between education and training. The establishment of the NETTs was mostly

effected by employers. For 20 years, education has also been a high priority among the three main political parties during their terms. We have Charters. Consumers, students, businesses are expected to be able to go to a college and get a document which says this is what you can expect from us in terms of services provided. Therefore, colleges have to keep a close eye on people's demands. We still have a long way to go. For instance, the participation of students at 16 years of age is high but how can we help them to achieve a higher standard?

**The researcher:** How about adult demands, such as for liberal education?

**Ms Thrane:** The DFE has made its priority clear on the vocational and qualifying provision. There are arguments claiming liberal education can lead to vocational qualifications. I am not sure we have any evidence for that. There are more concerns about people who lost their learning opportunities or are without updated skills. Some firms have started giving their employees education vouchers for basic-skill training or DIY programmes to get better workforce.

**The researcher:** There is an argument which applies the idea of social welfare saying learning is a right. The government cannot only put its focus on practical targets and overlook the needs of adults who learn out of interest.

**Ms Thrane:** Ministers will say that within the laws there are regulations giving LEAs the responsibility to provide liberal adult education. There are many voices arguing that since the LEA's priority is school education, the resources for liberal adult education are limited and this Council should take over all of the duties for providing various types of adult education. I think this Council would welcome that and the provision depends on how much money is available.

**The researcher:** Comparatively speaking, are adults your target group or those who are 16 to 19?



**Ms Thrane:** According to the legislation, we do cover these two groups. We have different legal responsibilities. What we want is to help colleges to grow, in terms of their needs. Since their majority is 16-19 year olds, they could be the target group. But, when adults become the majority of colleges, they will be the target group. We don't actively decide the numbers of adults and young adult students in the colleges. The trend is developed by the market.

## **12.5 Demanded ACE policies**

**The researcher:** What is your demanded ACE policy, in terms of your personal agenda?

**Ms Thrane:** At this moment, my priority is to encourage more people to participate in further education, not only learning. I want adults who have been out of the education system for a long time to take the first step. I would like to encourage them to continue their steps. I would like to encourage more firms to see education and training positively. I would also like to know how colleges can change the curriculum offered in order to bring that about. My policies are to improve the participation rate, intention rate and qualification rate. What I am not clear about at this moment is what to do to bring those policies into effect and what we can do by providing the funding to colleges they need, and bring colleges, schools and all the concerned people together to work.

